

Vision and Service

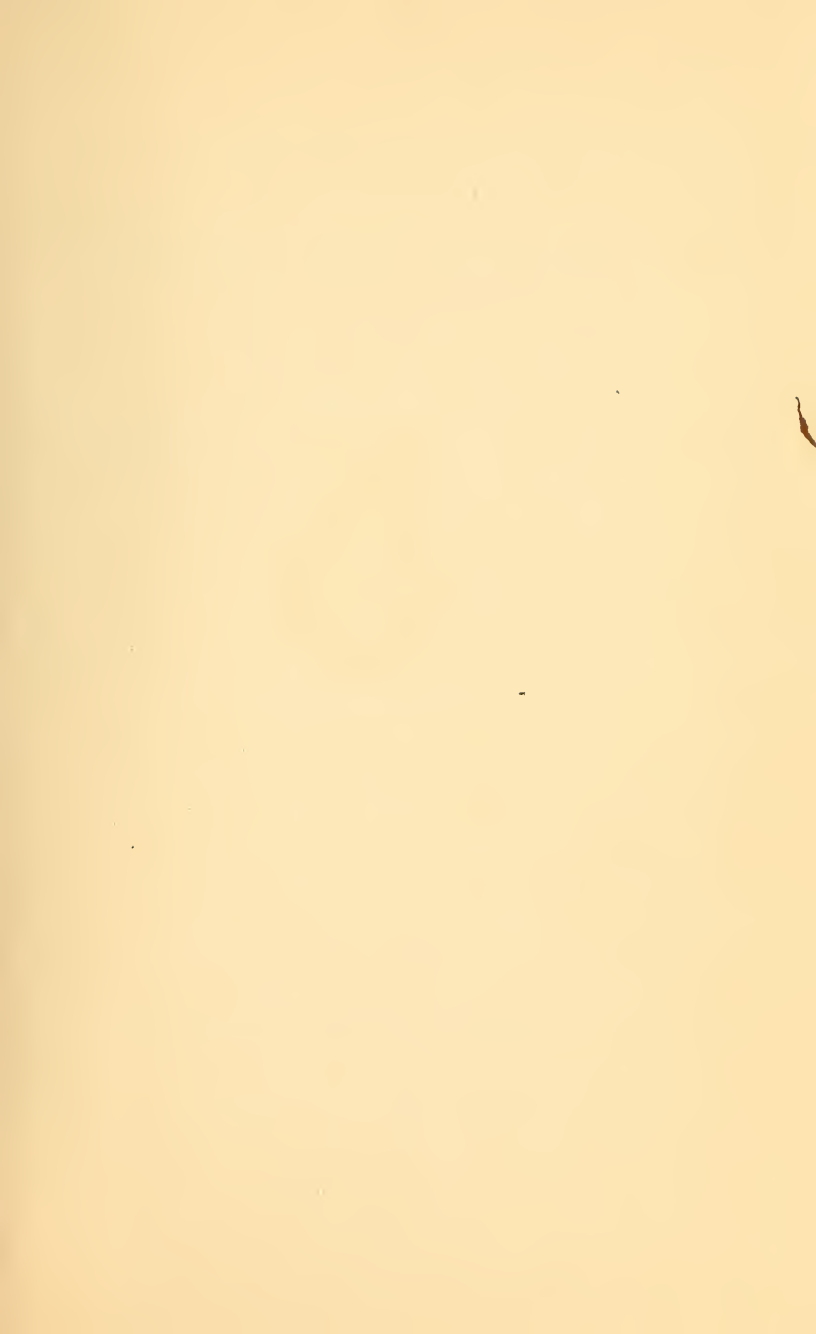
John Balcom Shaw, D.D.



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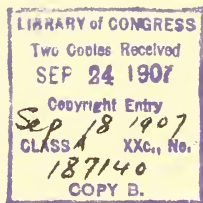
BY

JOHN BALCOM SHAW, D.D., LL.D.

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To My Mother

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VISION AND SERVICE

*“And it came to pass in those days, that
He went out into a mountain to pray, and
continued all night in prayer to God.”*

Luke vi. 12

*“And He came down with them, and
stood in the plain.”*

Luke vi. 17

VISION AND SERVICE

THE ascent into the mountain was for vision; the descent into the plain for service. Vision and service—this was the dual secret of our Lord's life; vision always impelling Him to service, and service demanding a vision for its guidance and inspiration. One hand, that nearest His heart, was ever upstretched into the blue, keeping hold upon the unseen and the eternal; while the other, the right hand, which is the hand of dexterity and service, was outstretched into the world around Him, feeling for its need and giving itself to its fulfillment.

Christian character and Christian work know no other secret with us than this—vision

and service. Surely, vision is ever man's highest and deepest need. As the sage of old phrased it,

"Where there is no vision the people perish."

Their ideals fall like the stone god in Dagon's temple, the stars go out from the soul's firmament, motive deteriorates, character disintegrates, duty is no longer a high and holy word, and life becomes an empty, aimless, nerveless, fruitless thing.

What is vision? First of all *a look upward*. "Man," said Sabatier, "is incurably religious." No less true is Miss Muloch's dictum, "An irreligious woman is an anomaly"; that is to say, born with a soul, there is but one atmosphere in which we thrive, the air which blows from off the eternal hills. We may ignore our religious nature, but we cannot eradicate it. It is within us to stay; it must be reckoned with; it demands a hearing, and sooner or later will get it.

What is it that distinguishes man from the rest of creation? "His mind," you promptly say; but have not brutes mind? So simple an insect as the mosquito exer-

cises, as we have all had abundant occasion to realize, the most discriminating forethought and cunning. If you tell me that by mind you mean reason, you will have to change your answer yet again. Have you never seen a horse or a dog think, calculate, and decide? Memory is the elephant's forte, as it is not most men's. Nor can you differentiate man by calling him a speaking animal, for many brutes utter articulate sounds.

No, it is not that man thinks or reasons or talks or laughs that he is different from other animals. These are his two distinguishing characteristics: (1) That he is a worshipping animal—he may talk with his Maker; he must talk with his Maker. (2) That God talks with him. Never does the Creator talk with the mountains or the sea or the rivers; His sole means of communication with them are His fixed laws—cold, mute, inarticulate laws. These He ordained at the beginning, and ever since they have uttered His exclusive message to the inanimate world. The voice in which He expresses Himself to the brute creation is instinct—what Her-

bert Spencer calls "leaden instinct." These tell His irrational creatures all that He has to say to them.

Made to speak with God and to be spoken to by God, what must man deteriorate into without a vision? He becomes a degenerate, a moral pervert, a spiritual dwarf, an Esau who has sold his birthright and is running away from home. Kepler felt this when, looking up into the heavens, he exclaimed, "I think Thy thoughts after Thee, O God!" Browning felt it when he wrote those strong, vital words:

"But, I need now, as then,
Thee, God, that moulded men."

True to the eternal verities was that inscription in the noble Memorial Chapel of the Leland Stanford University, so recently and ruthlessly destroyed: "There is no narrowness so deadly as narrowness of spiritual vision."

In order, then, to fulfill the highest need of our being, we must be men and women of vision. And when the vision comes to us, immediately shall we be impelled to serv-

ice. The atmosphere of the unseen world is charged with love, and in inbreathing it we imbibe the spirit of service. Service is God's highest passion. He created the world that He might express Himself to others; He inspired the scriptures that they might better utter His thoughts; He planned the Incarnation that through the human life of His Son He might serve His creatures in a higher form. Therefore, when man climbs the mount and looks up into the face of his God, he is forthwith driven down from the mount into the plain to stand among the people. Charles Loring Brace heard Horace Bushnell's great sermon and, being brought as never before into the presence of God, he felt the summons to service and immediately gave his life to the world-renowned work with which his name will ever be associated. Wendell Phillips, brought into closer touch with God through the ministry of Lyman Beecher, went home to dedicate himself to the service of humanity. He who knows God, and only he, can live the life

"Whose throbs are love,
Whose thrills are song."

Humboldt tells us that after bathing among the Noctilucae in the phosphorescent waters of the South Pacific his person was luminous for hours, and another has reported a valley in the interior of Persia so exceptionally and exquisitely fragrant that persons upon emerging therefrom carry its odor upon their garments for days afterwards. I cannot long practice the presence of God without having the light of His love stream out from my person, and its perfume breathe itself forthwith into and through my life.

But vision is more than a look upward; it is equally *a look forward*. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews tells us that the secret of Moses' life was that he "saw Him who is invisible," and also that "he had respect unto (looked away to) the recompense of reward." That is to say, in a perpetual vision he saw God, and he also gazed far into the future.

This forward vision may not always see the eternal consequences of life; it is often enough if it gives the temporal perspective of things. A boy grows forward into the years with no strong ambition controlling

him. He is one of a hundred other lads of the town. But suddenly an impulse seizes him. He sees what he can be. He knows what he wants to be. Was it what Mrs. Browning calls

A dream dreamt right in a world gone wrong”?

Or was it the outgrowth of the nature given him by his parents? Or was it God’s summons to a foreordained task? Describe it as you may, it was a star he had never seen in his firmament before, an inspiring look into the future years, a vision of a possible goal hitherto unseen by him. He begins at once to climb toward it. His books have a new delight for him. His eyes set all the while upon the star, every year brings him nearer and nearer to the goal, until, college done and the subsequent training over, he steps at length into the glory of a distinguished and useful career. Had the boy never had his vision, he would never have been heard of, and vision for him was *a look ahead*. Mrs. Burnett, in her recent book, calls this “the dawn of a to-morrow.”

It is a story of a London merchant who gives his name at the lodging house as Anthony Dart. He is bent upon suicide. One day standing upon London Bridge contemplating his intention, he accidentally drops a gold sovereign, when what had seemed before nothing but a bundle of rags leaning up against the pier darts forward and, seizing it with alacrity, looks up into his face as if begging to be allowed to keep it. Of what use was money to one so soon to take his life? He gives it to the girl, and the only way in which she feels she can express her gratitude is to lead him away from his intended purpose. She succeeds in getting him to follow her through the narrow streets and lanes, up into her garret room. With the money he had given her she soon kindles the first fire which the garret had known for weeks, and, spreading out a supply of food, calls in her pauper neighbors to share in her good fortune. As Anthony beholds this scene, there comes to him a vision in a London garret which he never had in his metropolitan mansion. He sees what his fortune can do to relieve human distress, and he

forthwith begins the career which makes him as famous a benefactor as he was before a merchant—Sir Oliver Holt, one of London's best-loved citizens.

The "dawn of a to-morrow" has never any other sequel but that of service. We cannot climb the mountain and look forward into the future without coming down and standing with the people in the plain.

Vision has yet another element entering into it. It is also *a look around*, an insight into the life of one's age, sympathy with the needs, the hopes, the joys, the burdens and sins of humanity about us. Charles Lamb told Coleridge he could never visit the Strand without shedding great tears of joy at the abounding life he saw about him on all sides. Its richer, fairer side spoke loudest to him. Had his vision been complete he would have seen at the same time another and darker picture, and some of the tears he shed would have been those of sorrow. We need to see both of these sides; we cannot keep normal and balanced unless we do. With only the first in sight we become morbid and pessimistic; without the latter our optimism is

neither sane nor wholesome. And, whichever we see, if our vision be the true one it will elicit sympathy. We shall rejoice with those that rejoice, and mourn with those that mourn. We shall become so interested in human life, so concerned for humanity, that our highest desire will be to serve the world about us. Blücher upon his first visit to London after the battle of Waterloo was taken, among other sights, to see the World's Metropolis from the dome of St. Paul's Cathedral. As he looked over the vast expanse of roofs and chimneys, the narrator tells us, he leaned far over the iron railing and exclaimed, "Oh, what a place for plunder!" Such a man could have had no outward vision of the world's real life. The visionless men and women of to-day are legion who, looking out into the world around them, have but one thought, not what they can put into it, but what they can get out of it—gain, luxury, comfort, ease, pleasure. Let them but climb the mountain and look off upon the real life of their times as it is throbbing and teeming all about them, and they cannot long remain on the summit, but must hasten

down and stand with the people in the plain.

Several years ago, I spent a good part of one Sunday afternoon on Calvary. Sentiment at first, very naturally, had control, and while in the midst of the deepest and holiest reverie I was interrupted by the approach of a flock of sheep that were grazing their way up the slope, and finally came so near as fairly to pluck the spears of grass beneath my feet. Fearing they might disturb me, their thoughtful shepherd in his picturesque oriental garb interposed and drove them away. Cast thereby into a still deeper reverie, I opened my Bible and began to read the familiar pastoral passages of the Good Shepherd and His sheep, and when wrapped in fond meditation I was again interrupted, this time by a band of beggars who had divined my mood and would take advantage of it. Could I turn them away? How could I on "the hill called Calvary"? As they stood before me in their penury, Christ seemed to appear amid the group and to address me and not them. "Even here come the want and woe of humanity," I heard Him

say. "Spend not your time in idle, selfish reverie. The world is calling you. Only as my disciples learn here the great lesson of Calvary and, breathing in its spirit, go down into the world to love it, to live for it and, if need be, to die for it, only so can that world be redeemed." Rebuked by His words, I closed my Bible and went down into the city again, singing in my heart, if not audibly with my lips:

"Must Jesus bear the cross alone,
And all the world go free?
No, there's a cross for every one,
And there's a cross for me.

"The consecrated cross I'll bear
Till death shall set me free,
And then go home my crown to wear,
For there's a crown for me."

If each of these three phases of a true vision prompts those who have it to service, how can he to whom the full vision has come, who, climbing the mount, has beheld the face of God, gazed on into the future, and looked off upon the world about him—how can he resist the call the plain below makes to him?

An American poet has expressed this truth in striking language :

“I had so much to ask of Christ
Before I saw His face.
Long years, contentment, peace unpriced,
Joy in His dwelling-place.
But when my lips had kissed His feet,
None of my needs I pled.
‘Let but my love make answer meet
To Thy dear love,’ I said.

“I had so much to ask of man,
Honor and joy and power,
Praise for my life’s perfected plan,
Help for my battle hour.
But when mine ears had heard the cry
Of flesh and blood for bread,
‘Let me be spent, endure and die,
Brothers, with you,’ I said.”

Vision and service, then, belong together. They cannot exist apart, but are as dependent upon each other as are now our physical and spiritual natures. Let vision fail to express itself in service, and it ceases to be vision. Let service try to exercise itself without first getting its vision, it will lose its title to the name. There is no lesson our age needs more to learn than this. It is because the

Church has not learned it or, learning it, has not applied it, that she suffers in so many quarters from indifference and opposition. She has been too content to climb the mountain and stay there while the people were crying loudly for help on the plain below. A like fault can be charged against many modern organizations at work outside the Church. They make so little progress and secure such meager returns because they have gone to work, in so many instances, without first seeking a vision, or without waiting for the full vision. It may be they have climbed the mount and looked off upon the world's need, but they are not doing their work "as seeing Him who is invisible" or with the unseen and the eternal straight before them.

THE WHITE SIGNAL

“Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.”

Matthew xxv. 21

THE WHITE SIGNAL

AS our boat rounded the point and the great harbor came into sight, there lay before us one dazzling stretch of variegated lights, some near and some far away. Had I been at the wheel, I would have grown confused and rung to the engineer to slow down. Not so our captain. He was as self-possessed as a sentinel on duty, and, if anything, the vessel quickened her speed instead of slackening it. Presently, seeing there were no stars to steer by, for it was a cloudy night, I ventured to ask the captain which of the lights he was shaping his course to. "That little white light farthest in at the right," he said, and dropped once more into his wonted silence. Fearing

to interrupt him again, I began to study the lights for myself, and the reason for his choice soon became clear. The other signals were larger and more brilliant and therefore easier to locate, but many of them moved with the craft to which they were suspended and none of them seemed stationary, but the white light up at the end of the row was fixed and steady and evidently could be depended upon. As we bore down upon the wharf, it revealed itself to be a government signal set just at the edge of the channel and on a line with the landing dock, so that by pointing toward it no captain could fail to land his vessel easily and safely.

Thus I learned that night my first lesson in piloting—thanks to the reticence of the old captain—yes, and the first principle of soul-steering, too. For many and varied are the signals along the religious horizon, and if we would keep to the right course we must be careful which we steer by.

Straight ahead, always in sight, and flashing its striking color against the dark background, is the blue light of orthodoxy—the right creed, a proper religious sentiment, an

approved intellectual attitude. Only believe right, it seems to say to us, and you are safe. And there on the port side is another dazzling signal, the yellow light of impulse, emotion, aspiration, gleaming out large and luminous upon the waters. Only feel right, and you may be sure you are in the channel. Still another light gleaming out over the waters is the red signal of convention, form and ceremony. But none of these lights, brilliant as they are, mark the main channel, and there would be peril in shaping the soul's course by them.

Look sharply, and just at your right, seemingly far ahead, but in reality very near, so small that you have to search for it, but always burning steadily, is the little white light of duty, which because it is fixed and constant can be depended upon day in and day out, night after night, the year around and life through. Steer by that, and you are sure to keep in the channel where the current is deep and to make the right landing stage. God's authoritative hand set this signal along life's shore and keeps it duly trimmed and tended, so that it may never go out.

More and more am I persuaded that the chief citadel of my religious life is the conscience; that the most likely place for me to find God is in the little duties which He has given me. Let me be faithful in these, let me live up to the light He has given me, and I shall come to a fuller knowledge of Him and a closer relation with Him than if I trusted myself to creed-saying or impulse-making. How apt we all are to be looking for some larger and more brilliant light to shape our course to—an ecstatic experience, an unusual rapture, or a distinguishing achievement, something above the commonplace and out of the ordinary. Heading the prow in that direction, we soon find ourselves in shallow water, and, unless we are master-captains, will run our boat upon the shoals. In fine, the highest word in all the language of life is duty.

“Do thy duty, that is best.
Leave unto thy God the rest,”

as the old monk sang, and God will shape for your life the highest and noblest ends.

“Straight is the line of duty,
Curved is the line of beauty.
Follow the straight line, thou shalt see
The curved line ever follows thee.”

Now to appreciate this truth, we must drop the poetic and become prosaic and commonplace. Let us be baldly simple at this point, then. You feel yourself a downright drudge—nothing but a drudge. You have only a clerk's position with tiresome routine day after day, which you say is enough to rob any man of aspiration. Your wage is small, your firm unappreciative and your prospect of advance long since gone. “What chance have I,” you say to yourself daily, “to be anything worth while in such a position?” That, I admit, is as difficult a harbor to make as any along the coast. You will lose the channel unless you steer right. Lay your course to the signal of duty. Say to yourself a thousand times a day: I must be honest and true and brave and cheerful. I owe it to myself. I owe it to my family and, above all, to my God. Will it really matter in the end what the firm has said or done? Will it matter at last whether you have been rich or

just lived from hand to mouth? What shall the Master say? Ah, that is the question. Be it your ambition to win this word: "Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

Or you are a hard-driven business man, making money, yes, but for that very reason under the heaviest pressure. The competition is fierce and honesty hard. Your salvation, my busy friend, lies in the enthronement of the conscience. You may be never so zealous for the Kingdom, most punctilious in church obligations and unquestionably sound in the faith, but these will be of no avail if you are not true to yourself, your higher, better self. What Lincoln said in his world-famed Cooper Union speech you and I need to say to one another daily: "Let us dare to do our duty as we understand it." Oh, the blessedness of a man who goes to his bed at night with a conscience void of offense toward God and man!

Or, still staying down close to everyday life, you are the over-worked mother of a large family. Little did you think that night

of the gay wedding that a few years could rob life of so much of its poetry. There is no respite for you these days, no diversion, no let-up of strain and responsibility and care. How often you sigh for something larger and more achieving in life. You look away to the brilliant lights that are shining beyond and long for the time when you can steer life's course to them. Will the time never come when you can belong to a woman's club, or help do the church work, or shine in society? Don't look away. It will make you restless, unhappy, and blind to duty. Keep your eye on the little steady white light—your obligation to those children—there is nothing higher; your duty to your husband; your contribution to the domestic life of the nation; your part in shaping the character of the next generation. Only in that direction is there deep water. All others lead to the shoals. Of mothers, even more than of generals like Wellington, might Tennyson sing:

“Not once or twice in our fair island-story,
The path of duty was the way to glory.”

Or worst of all—let me choose my words here—you sometimes think you made a mis-

take in marrying. The romance of courtship has faded into the commonplace of conjugal toleration, if not incompatibility. The woman whom you thought flawless has been discovered to have her faults and many of them. The husband you once felt proud to give your heart to is indifferent and dissipated. You have been ashamed of him more than once lately. Do you chafe under the bondage of it all? Are you tempted to do something desperate? Then you are out of the channel. You are missing the one safe light. Obligation—not sentiment or romance or personal ease, or even happiness—is the word for you to conjure with. A home built upon a love that is sentimental, emotional, physical, passionate, is a house on the sand, which the least domestic gale will blow down. But build your home upon honor, obligation, the duty of wifeness, husbandhood and parenthood, and your home is a castle founded upon the rock that nothing can overthrow.

“I slept and dreamed that life was beauty,
I awoke and found that life was duty.”
Was thy dream, then, a shadowy lie?

Toil on, poor heart, unceasingly,
And thou shalt find thy dream to be
A truth and noonday light to thee.

“But you are putting the primary accent in religion upon morality,” you say with alarm. Of course I am. Since when was it an error to do that? You can talk about the baptism of the Holy Spirit till your death day, but if duty is not the signal-light of your life, if you are not faithful in little things, your religion is vain and you are as far away from Jesus Christ as midnight is from noon-day.

There is no true religion that is not based upon morality; yes, religion grows out of morality as a flower grows out of the stalk. As some one has said, “The course of the Christian is from small moral matters up to large religious ones.” The Episcopal Church is true to the truth of things and at once ethically and theologically sound when it makes its catechumens say: “To do my duty in that state of life unto which it shall please God to call me.” Why can we not all say that without having to fall back upon a catechism? Emerson’s dictum has never

been superseded. He was heretical in other matters but not in this. Write the words in fire across your soul: "Virtue is the essence of all religion. When a man says, 'I ought,' then will he worship and be enlarged by his worship."

"Stern daughter of the voice of God,
O Duty!
Stern law-giver! Yet thou dost wear
The Godhead's most benignant grace.
Nor know we anything so fair
As is the smile upon thy face.

"Flowers laugh before thee in their beds,
And fragrance in thy footing treads.
Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong,
And the most ancient heavens through thee
Are fresh and strong."

Duty, then, is the starting-point of a true religious life; it is also its guide and governor; its preceptor and trainer, leading us on into the higher, farther lessons of life.

(1) The first of these is obedience. Meeting the lower obligations in faithfulness, they become to us "stepping stones that slope through darkness up to God." Duty to others leads us on to duty to our Maker. None are so loyal to Jesus Christ, none so

submissive to God's authority, as those who have been schooled to respect the claims of earthly relationships and come on gradually to accept the claims of the divine and eternal. When a father makes his boy mind he is teaching him the first lesson in religion.

(2) Faith is the next outcome of this training. Who has ever taken duty for his master, set himself to faithfulness, without feeling forthwith his incompetency for even the little obligations and being forced to look above him for help? The descent of duty is ever followed by the ascent of faith. Professor Peabody in his last book * says, "Two ways run parallel in every life, a way of duty and a way of faith."

(3) And the third child of this parentage is love. Law and love are tied inseparably together in the religious world. What is spiritual love? Let one more competent than I answer: "Love is righteousness applied to happiness. It is not mystical rapture; it is not passive acceptance; it is duty done with joy. To love God is not an act of the heart and soul only, but of the mind and strength;

* *Jesus Christ and the Christian Character.*

a rational and effective affection." * Love has its seat, not in the emotions, but the will. As our old college preacher used to say: "We must love an earthly being to obey him, but we must obey God to love Him." One greater than either put it thus: "Love is the fulfilling of the law"—that is to say, its resultant, its goal, its final unfolding.

What better preparatory school than this? Nay, it is not a school; it is life's highest university whose diploma is the most valuable I can acquire. Let me come forth into life from out such training—faith, obedience, love—and I am well equipped for all that it may bring to me. Goethe's motto, strange to say, is wonderfully orthodox:

"Like a star
That shines afar,
Without haste, without rest,
So let us move,
With steady sway,
Around the task
That rules our day,
And do our best."

* Peabody in *Jesus Christ and the Christian Character*,
p. 125.

*A SEASIDE VISION AND
ITS SEQUEL*

“He lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the seaside.”

Acts x. 6

A SEASIDE VISION AND ITS SEQUEL

SIMON PETER on a visit to Joppa, enjoying a sojourn at the seashore! When he was at Lydda, only a few miles from here, Dorcas had died, and the disciples at Joppa, saddened and confused by this bereavement, had sent urging him to come to their relief. Peter responded at once, and upon reaching the stricken circle, miraculously restored the lamented Dorcas. This done, he decided to change his former plans and remain for a while in Joppa, the influences that moved him probably being the need that the impression produced by the miracle should be followed up and made to yield tangible results, and the urgent insistence of the disciples there that he should tarry with them for a

while and strengthen their hands, together, possibly, with a strong personal inclination to seize the auspicious opportunity and take a brief breathing spell before resuming his missionary travels. Having reached this decision, he wisely chose for his headquarters the home of Simon, a tanner, which was located down by the sea.

Peter's sojourn here, brief as it proved to be, was one of the most critical and important periods of his life. It is interesting to us not only because of the events which it witnessed, but also on account of the suggestions it makes to Christian workers who for any reason may have occasion to be away from home on a sojourn, particularly to those who are in the habit of taking a summer holiday, whether it be spent at the seashore or in the mountains.

How did Peter employ his time at Joppa? What did he find to do at the seashore? The Sacred Canon does not tell us that he went bathing, or boating, or fishing—such items were not necessary to the narrative—but that is no reason why we should believe that he did not. Peter was human, unusually human,

we sometimes think, and undoubtedly enjoyed recreation as much as any one. For a man who had been a fisherman all his early days to lodge by the sea—a real sea this time, and no inland lake like Gennesaret, which did not deserve the name—without trying his hand at the line or net once more and launching a boat to see what the difference between a sea and lake might be, was an improbability, almost an impossibility. And if he did, there was nothing undignified or unholy in his course. It did him good. It prepared him for more effective service. It sent him away from Joppa with a quicker step and a lighter heart, with greater vigor of mind and body both.

All Christian workers need a vacation, and there is nothing that indicates a lack of consecration in their taking one, or a lack of dignity or decorum in their enjoying it to the full. Recreation is absolutely necessary for everybody, and the best kind of recreation is the kind that relaxes. It is one thing to take a vacation and another thing to spend it aright. To rest well is an art, an enviable art, and is as important as the art of working

well. Doubtless, if we knew the facts, we should find that Peter's example at Joppa was a safe one to follow, and gave us a warrant to get all we could out of our summer sojournings; but we do not need such a warrant. We have it in the constitution of man; we have it in the drain and depletion incident to the remainder of the year; we have it in the restless, exciting conditions of our modern life.

Therefore, I say to you all, and I feel I can speak with as good authority as if it were possible to read it in so many words out of the Bible: take all the relaxation, summer-time and winter-time alike, that you can get, and when you relax, relax as though you meant it. Make a business of it. Do it conscientiously. It is your solemn duty to yourself and family, to your partners and patrons, to all whom you touch in life and all who touch you. You will be the healthier, larger, stronger in mind, body, and soul if you do.

Our imagination leads us in another direction as we muse upon Peter's seaside sojourn. I say our imagination—I might better say our reasoning, for we are not speculating or

guessing, we are drawing legitimate conclusions from well-founded premises. Taking Peter's temperament for our guide, we can readily infer another way in which he spent his time at Joppa. He had considerable sentiment in his make-up; all people of his type have. With such a nature he could never have lodged in a town having the historic associations which Joppa had, by a sea like the Mediterranean, and not lost himself in reflections the most serious and sanctifying.

The sea, though the symbol of restlessness, is to most people a source of the completest repose, not repose of mind so much as repose of spirit, a calming and silencing of the inner nature which gives feeling an opportunity to assert itself and permits thought to act with more than ordinary vigor. In these serene and quiet hours, therefore, Peter, we may well believe, went over his work in careful review, examining its defects, computing its results, and brooding over its lessons; he would naturally think of the future and formulate plans for his work; he would revert to the miracle he had just wrought and meditate upon its meaning to him as well as to

those who witnessed it. From these and many other lines of reflection he must have imbibed wholesome encouragement and restraint, inspiring confidence and cheer.

This is exactly what every sojourn we take should do for us—give us time to think, to look over our personal accounts, to balance the ledgers of life, to review the past, to contemplate the future, to make our plans and develop our purposes; in a word, it should give us an opportunity for the calmest and closest self-communion.

But Peter communed with God as well as with himself. Every pious soul does at such times. What impressions the breaking billows, the wide, trackless expanse of water, the hazy horizon—a sight entirely new to him—must have made upon Peter, and what thoughts they must have started! Face to face with scenes that spoke so eloquently of the Creator, a soul like Peter's could not have helped being lifted up into the immediate presence of God and given a spiritual endowment.

This is what we should seek for in every season of relaxation, to get near to nature's

heart; and in doing this we shall get near to the heart of God. If the sea, or the mountains, or the rivers, or the forests do not open for us a straight, a luminous path to God, we have not approached them in the right spirit, and have failed to discover the opportunities they offer. Every visit to the country ought to expand, ennoble, endow our souls.

There were other thoughts which doubtless occupied Peter's mind during his sojourn with Simon the tanner. Joppa was a historic place. It was here that Jonathan Maccabæus met Ptolemy; here the Philistines once dwelt and exercised their cruel tyranny; here Solomon received the wood which Hiram shipped for the temple; here similar materials were landed for Zerubbabel's use in rebuilding the temple, and it was from this port that Jonah set sail for his memorable voyage. Think you Peter forgot all this? Not for a moment; he could not have failed to revert to it with reverent and suggestive thought. And what subjects it opened up to him—subjects for study, for comparison and contrast, for warning and encouragement:

themes which must have been pre-eminently impressive, instructive, inspiring!

May we not have something of the same experience wherever we go to take our summer sojourn? Yes, if our hearts are open and receptive, if we are seekers after truth and are willing to receive it from the hands of any and every teacher prepared to impart it. It may come from the present rather than the past associations of the place; from its *personnel* instead of its history; from the simple lives, the honest toil, the homely faith of its humble folk, but come it will in some way and under some form, if we are diligently in search of it, and when it does come it will be to us an imperishable benediction.

But we have sufficient in what is written of Peter's sojourn without going back of that for suggestion. Two things are recorded about his visit at Joppa which are as interesting as they are pertinent and suggestive.

I. Peter had a vision here—in some respects the greatest vision of his life. You will readily recall it. He was up on the housetop praying. Gradually, as he looked off upon the sea, his prayer probably merged

into meditation, and as the time passed he grew unconsciously hungry. When in this condition a great sheet knit at the four corners and filled with four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts and creeping things and fowls of the air, was let down to him with the command, "Rise, Peter, slay and eat." Thrice was this done, and thrice was his refusal to eat rebuked with the words, "What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common."

The purpose of this vision was to teach him the equality of the Gentiles with the Jews, and his duty to preach the Gospel to them as well as to his countrymen. That vision transformed his convictions and completely changed the bent of his career; it marked an epoch in the history of Christianity; it turned the tide of the Gospel into a new channel; it determined the universality of the Kingdom of God on the earth; it practically settled the status and destiny of the heathen world—and all this occurred during a seaside visit of a few days.

There are visions for every Christian at the seashore, and at every place where our

tramps and travels may happen to take us—visions of duty, of responsibility, of truth, of glory, of God; visions that reveal to us our Father's will; visions that outline the path of service; visions that make known to us the deeper things of faith. These are often so important that our future depends upon them, and to be blind to them would be a misfortune and a sin.

But visions come to those only who are prepared to receive them. It was so with Peter. It is always so. Like him, we must be on the housetop praying if we would have revelations. Our eyes must be open to the deeper things about us—our souls in communion with God—or visions are impossible. If you go away and leave your Bible and your religion behind, demitting prayer, church attendance and the other functions of your soul-life, you need not expect to have God come to you in any new disclosures of Himself; but if you go seeking fresh supplies of grace and prepared to receive greater light and strength, these will surely come, and as Peter left Joppa a stronger man in soul as well as in body, so you shall return to your

homes to live a larger, higher spiritual life thereafter than ever before.

II. The second event which occurred during this sojourn of Peter's was his experience with Cornelius. God did not allow him to be idle. He wanted to teach him that the opportunity and duty of doing good are always and everywhere present. He seemed to want to show others through Peter that the time of relaxation is often the most likely and fruitful time for practical Christian work. Hence, instead of making the necessary revelation Himself to Cornelius, He bade him send down to Peter for instruction and direction, thereby necessitating a journey from Cæsarea to Joppa and at the same time abruptly terminating Peter's visit with Simon the tanner at the seashore. Peter obeyed the summons and became unexpectedly the means of bringing into the Kingdom no less a personage than the centurion of a Roman guard, a man who brought prestige incalculable to the cause of Jesus.

Seaside or mountain sojourns are always periods of religious opportunity. God gives all of us some work to do at such times, and

in not a few instances it proves the most important work of the year. Is this not frequently the case with all our incidental tasks? We make them under-rank those which belong to the regular routine and schedule of our lives, but the opposite order turns out at length to be the true one. This will invariably be the history of all the duties which Providence brings to us when on our summer outings. Do not say that your neglect to attend church or prayer-meeting, or to keep the Sabbath, will do no one any harm since you are among strangers. It will; its moral effect upon yourself will be everything but good, and it is sure to prove a stumbling-block to the country folk, who naturally look to their city visitors for a high Christian example. Do not excuse yourself from teaching a Sunday-school class because your stay is to be so short. Who would attempt to measure the results of one single half-hour Bible lesson prayerfully and earnestly taught? Regard not the brevity of a sojourn as an excuse for any religious neglect whatsoever; rather consider it an argument for exceptional activity. The smallest service, that costs you nothing

more than a passing effort, may prove of inestimable value to a poorly-sustained rural church, and produce impressions which only God can compute.

A city pastor was spending his vacation at a summer resort not far from New York. He was weary with the year's arduous work, and when invited to occupy the pulpit of the little church he felt it his duty to decline. Toward the close of the summer, however, he yielded, and preached a sermon of great eloquence and power. A little country lad then in his early 'teens sat in one of the pews that day and listened to the sermon with the closest attention. He had never heard anything quite like it before, and it thrilled him to his soul's depth. It set chords of his nature to vibrating which he did not know existed. It awakened impulses within him whose meaning he could not understand. The preacher was God's special messenger to him that day, who seemed to open up before him a vista down which his life was to pass. As the result of the impression made upon him by that sermon he afterward entered the ministry, and is to-day the pastor of one of

our city churches, preaching to a large congregation and reaching thousands of souls. That one sermon, delivered during a summer sojourn, probably counted for more than all the sermons of a twelvemonth preached to the minister's own people at home. Opportunities as great as this may come to us all, clergy and laity alike. Let us watch for them, and when they present themselves seize them and use them.

What does Peter's seaside sojourn teach us, then? That such a season may be and ought to be to every Christian a time for genuine recreation, for serious reflection, for special revelations, and for more than usual diligence and consecration.

THE OLD AND THE NEW

*“That ye put off the old man . . .
and that ye put on the new man.”*

Ephesians iv. 22, 24

THE OLD AND THE NEW

THE apostle here speaks of human nature generically as "the man."

When that human nature is dominated by sin, he describes it as the "old man"; when it is under the control of righteousness he characterizes it as the "new man." Was ever a distinction more discriminating and exact than that? It is a fact behind which stands the proof of the ages, that sin is intrinsically and characteristically old and that righteousness is inherently and proverbially new.

And that does not mean simply that sin ages the person who indulges in it, while righteousness renews one's youth and keeps one ever buoyant and vigorous. That is

true, of course, invariably, universally true, as we have all had occasion to observe, if not to experience. Is there anything that will sap one's vitality and make him prematurely old as will dissipation, putting the bend into his shoulders, the furrows into his face and the disease germs into his blood? I never visit a rescue home but that is my chief impression. Some years ago the adjutant general of the Salvation Army took me the rounds of their lodging-houses in London, patronized for the most part by ex-convicts and other criminal classes, and when I came away I felt that I had visited a great infirmary.

Equally striking is the converse of this. There is nothing so youth-giving as right living. The youngest spirits I know are men and women of three-score years and ten or more, who have always treated their bodies as the temples of the Holy Ghost, and across whose lives there is traceable no track of a foul past. Dr. Cuyler, in that remarkable book, *The Recollections of a Long Life*, has said that the secret of his unusual vitality at eighty—he was then eighty and is now eighty-five—was his clean and correct life.

That was Gladstone's secret. It is the secret of our Grand Old Man of America, the present chaplain of the United States Senate. A few weeks ago, on my way back from the Adirondack Mountains, where I spend my summers, I stopped off in Canada to see a great-uncle who, on the thirteenth of August, celebrated his ninety-fifth birthday, and on that very day led up the aisle of the church on his arm his youngest daughter to give her away in matrimony. As I sat beside that dear old man, a modern saint, and keener in his intellect than I can ever be, I felt the renewing power of goodness—the youthfulness of goodness. There is nothing so rejuvenating, my friends, as is righteousness.

But that is not the point here. It is not that sin is aging and holiness youth-giving. It is that sin *essentially*, in and of itself, is old, and that righteousness *essentially*, in and of itself, is new; that sin is senile, effete, of wasting vitality and lessening resources, and, on the other hand, the pure, the good, the true, the holy, bear the marks and have the nature of perennial youthfulness.

Now, you have not always been accus-

tomed to think that. Your impressions have been quite the contrary. You have said, "Oh, righteousness is so slow; it is so tardy and unaggressive; always lagging behind in the march of civilization; always hesitant to force a battle, and, when the battle is fought, to claim the victory, while sin is so alert and enterprising, ever keen of scent and quick of action." In this you have been right and you have also been wrong. The trouble is you have confused subject and predicate; you have made the mistake of ascribing the qualities of the agency to the agent himself. Righteousness as we know it is slow and tardy, unassertive and unaggressive; it is hesitant about manifesting itself or claiming its own rights, but what kind of righteousness are we dealing with? Human righteousness, and therefore righteousness modified and adulterated. But take essential, original righteousness, the righteousness of God, if you please. How swift it is! How positive! How aggressive! How irresistibly enterprising, so that you and I have always to be commanding ourselves, as did Julia Ward Howe,

"Be swift, my soul, to answer Him, be jubilant, my feet,
Our God is marching on."

And what do we find at the opposite pole? Satan is indeed alert and active. He never tires. He abounds in energy, but look at the instrument which he wields. Do you not see the rust on its scabbard? and will you mark the blade, how dull it is, how dented, how bent? Why, the fact is, sin has nothing new to offer us. Long ago it used up its possibilities. It has no further ingenuity or inventiveness. So far as its method is concerned, it is *passé*. Alexander the Great, weeping because there were no more worlds to conquer, has a counterpart in the devotee, worn out and *blasé*, who can find no new depths of dissipation to fathom, and no further rounds of pleasure to sally forth upon. He has used up the resources of sin and is ennuied and satiated.

Take a broad, long look into history and see if this be not true. Let us begin with *the social evil*. We think very little about it ordinarily, and say less, unless it is obtruded upon us by some such tragedy as the murder now occupying so much space in our news-

papers, and then we are inclined to remark, "This is one of the penalties of modern life." But we are wrong. The social evil in none of its phases is new. Will you step back with me, a good long step, from New York or Chicago to Pompeii? What tourist has not been amazed as he has visited the ruins of that great city? Signs still decipherable on some of the houses, obscene carvings in out-of-the-way corners, and the suggestive appointments of some of the rooms all show that things were far worse in Pompeii than they are to-day. Then let us take another step back from Pompeii to Babylon. There you find the same things, only they are worse. And then one immense stride back to the border of civilization, to Sodom. Behold! everything that flourishes in our modern cities was known and practiced there. Why, there hasn't been anything new about the social evil for five thousand years.

Trace the history of what we call commercial oppression, and you will come out at the same conclusion. We protest against the cruelty of child labor and we inveigh against the sweat-shop, and why should we not? We

declare that the great corporations of this country are heartless and terribly selfish, and they are. But don't make the mistake of declaring these things modern, for you will only reveal your own ignorance if you do. Solon, for instance, lived twenty-five hundred years ago, and now holds an enviable position in history as a great lawgiver; but a distinguished author in a book recently published makes this statement concerning him: "Solon's system was built upon the false principle that wealth was the basis of respect and the guarantee of social standing." Solon, mind you! And this same author gives it as his professional opinion that in the building of all the great structures of Pericles' time there was everywhere in Greece an utter disregard of human life. Then we are simply attacking an ancient evil when we talk in these days about the sweatshops, the corporations and the cruelties of child labor.

But come down with me to the degradation of so-called modern high life. I do not know why they call it "high." It is about the lowest and basest thing that this world knows. I suppose that all that Henry Wat-

terson said about Newport society is true, and more than true. The gambling, the drunkenness, the gluttony and general bestiality practiced there are enough to make one shudder with the premonitions of the coming judgment. No doubt things are just about as bad as they can be, but, mark you, they are not any worse than they have been. Professor Mahaffy, in his book on *Greek Civilization*, has this to say of the period of the New Comedy: "The life of the youth of Athens was spent in drunkenness, in squandering money and the worst kind of dissipation. A similar condition existed at Corinth. These people were idle, for the most part rich, moving in good society, spending their earlier years in debauchery and their later years in sentimental regrets and reflections. They had no serious objects in life, and regarded the complications of a love affair as more interesting than the rise and fall of a nation's liberty." Doesn't that sound for all the world like a description of Newport society?

But, you say, there is one evil that *is* modern, and it remained for Theodore Roosevelt and his kind to bring it to the light. Muck-

raking is an evil peculiar to our age. Modern? Yes, if you call the days of Abraham Lincoln modern. Some of us recall the names of opprobrium they used to give the savior of our country fifty years ago, and how we are resenting them now, men and women of the South as well as of the North. Modern? Yes, if the days of Washington are modern. No patriot can read some of the early chapters of our American history without ebullitions of anger and resentment. Modern? Yes, if the days of Demosthenes and Æschines are modern. One historian tells us that attacks upon public men back in those days were scarcely less than scurrilous. No, muck-raking is not new, neither is political plunder nor commercial graft. All these are as old as our humanity. Sin has nothing new to bring to the footlights. It is the same old wearying and monotonous round, the same old repeated repertoire, the same old dingy stage settings. Sin is senile and effete. I never saw this better illustrated than in the remark of a young man whom I met a few years ago in Egypt. He had been seeing the sights of old Cairo, and I could detect something about

his eyes and sad face that told of dissipation. "How do you like Cairo?" I asked him, and he answered, "I am disappointed in it. It is nothing but New York and Chicago over again."

Turn to the other side and see if history does not as fully bear out our author when he says that righteousness is essentially and perennially new. Begin with sickness. Sickness is as old as the human body, but would you say that the means and methods of relieving sickness are old? No, there is always something inspiringly new about these, discovery after discovery, invention after invention, until the resources of *materia medica* and the skill of modern surgery are among the marvels of the world. If a young man should come to me and ask how he might become a great inventor, I would say: "Just give yourself to the work of relieving human suffering, and every day will bring you new revelations."

Take poverty next. Poverty may not be as old as the hills, but it is as old as the time when there were men to look and live upon the hills. Behold the contrast between

poverty and the agencies for relieving it! Do not you older people remember a dozen, yes, twenty-five, charitable organizations that have been organized in your time—the Visiting Nurses' Association, the Children's Aid Society, the Bureau of Charity, the Fresh Air Fund, the Needle Work Guild, and what not? And what is true of charity work is also true of its workers.

Charles Loring Brace, the founder of the Children's Aid Society, testified at the close of his first year's service in the slums of New York City that life had never been to him so rich, so glad a thing as it was then. And have you happened to hear of that incident in Matthew Arnold's life when, meeting a Christian worker in the slums of Whitechapel, he exclaimed, "What a lonely and sorrowful life, good man, yours must be!" The man replied with a smile on his face such as Matthew Arnold's had never worn: "Lonely and sorrowful? On the contrary I have been particularly light-hearted since coming to dwell and labor among these people." What is the declaration of humanity's greatest Friend? "Behold, I make all things

new!" What is the final description of the city from which sin is to be forever banished and where righteousness shall be wholly dominant? "And I saw a *new* heaven and a *new* earth."

But why do I go outside for my evidence? Let me come, men and women, into your own lives and recall to you some of the deeper experiences of your religion. Do you remember the night of your conversion, how the stars looked to you when you went again into the outside world? I discovered a dozen new constellations on my way home that night, and the whole world about me seemed infinitely more beautiful than before. Can you not recall your first communion, Christian? Did bread and wine ever taste half as sweet as at the sacred board that day? Surely, that was an instance where realization far exceeded anticipation. Perhaps I speak to some fellow-minister. My brother, shall we ever be able to describe our feelings that night of our ordination when the holy hands went down upon our heads? There was a magnetic thrill from the contact

of body with body, but there was also a spiritual thrill that leaped all through my being.

Revert to some other holy times in your life. That early morning, Christian mother, when you turned your face on your pillow and, beholding for the first time the little life you had brought into the world, felt the rush of motherhood coursing through your soul. That day, man, when the doctor said you could go in, and as your eyes fell upon that sweet, angelic form, you felt for the first time the divine emotion of fatherhood. Oh, what revelations of purity opened to you that day—what hitherto hidden resources of pleasure! What new burdens of responsibility dropped upon your conscience! What heights and depths and breadths and lengths of love stretched before you which, up to that moment, you never had known existed! This is why the path of the just shineth brighter and brighter unto the perfect day. Every day is a new creation, every successive providence a fresh revelation of God's love, every discovered beauty of nature a farther disclosure of "the glory that excelleth."

“The wildest winter storm is full of beauty,
The midnight’s lightning flash but shows the path of
duty,
Each living creature tells some new and joyous story,
The very trees and stones all catch a ray of glory,
If peace be in the heart.”

I speak to many young men and young women—a high privilege, yes, and a high responsibility! Every high-minded young person has three great ambitions: First, to be vigorous and strong and keep abreast of the times. Another ambition that impels you all is to get as much happiness out of life as possible. And your third ambition is to make your life worth while, achieving and successful. Well, link yourselves with sin, my young friends, and none of these ambitions will be realized. Life will be daily a duller, narrower, sadder, harder thing. Its possibilities and resources will soon be exhausted, and your usefulness and vigor gone. But ally yourselves with the pure, the good, the true, the godly, and every high ambition you know shall have an early and ever-expanding fulfillment. Life will prove itself a steadily deepening, gladdening experience, and your

chosen motto be like unto that which Phillips Brooks borrowed from Browning:

“Oh, the wild joy of living!

How good is man's life, the mere living!

How fit to employ all the mind and the heart and the
senses forever in joy!”

Men and women, younger and older, Satan comes to us saying, “Grow old with me, and you will soon be old, decrepit, cheerless, effete.” But Jesus also draws near, and this is His invitation:

“Grow old along with Me!

The best is yet to be,

The last of life for which the first was made.

Our times are in His hand,

Who said, ‘A whole I planned,

Youth shows but half; trust God, see all, nor be
afraid.’”

Shall not our answer to Him be?—

“My times be in Thy hand!

Perfect the cup is planned.

Let age approve of youth and death complete the same.”

*THE BLIND MAN'S
VISION*

“Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when He had found him, He said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God?”

“He answered and said, Who is He, Lord, that I might believe on Him?”

“And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen Him, and it is He that talketh with thee.

“And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped Him.”

John ix. 35-38

THE BLIND MAN'S VISION

THIS man's religious experience, it would seem, was both normal and typical. It was a distinct and progressive spiritual evolution, marking the several stages through which all men must pass, if they would come into a clear, intelligent and dynamic faith.

The evolution ran its course, it is true, in a single day—in less than a day, for that matter—one stage following another in quick succession; but that fact in no way militated against its genuineness. Grapes grown in a hot-house ripen in much less time than grapes grown in the open, but precisely the same processes are passed through, the only difference being in their length or duration. Will

you be good enough to trace with me the successive stages in the blind man's spiritual development?

I. It began with the physical for its basis. How interesting to note that Jesus volunteered His aid to this unfortunate man. Does He not always make the first advances? "Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you that ye should go and bring forth fruit." "I have come that ye might have life and that ye might have it more abundantly." "Ye will not come unto Me that ye might have life."

Jesus, in passing by, noticed the blind man, and, taking pity upon him, He anointed his eyes with improvised clay and sent him to the pool of Siloam to bathe, without identifying Himself to the man or laying any intellectual or spiritual requirement upon him. All that He bade him do was to betake himself as quickly as possible to the waters, and the narrative runs that "the man came seeing." It is only a straightforward, matter-of-fact record, but who can measure its full significance? He left the spring in the possession of a new faculty. Born blind, he had spent his

life up to this time in total darkness. Now he could see—and oh! what beauty, what glory opened up before him? He stepped at once into a new world. How wonderful the verdure of the earth, how yet more wonderful the blue of the firmament and the gold of the sunlight! In the words of Longfellow,

“A holy light illumined all the place.”

People had told him in the days of his blindness what the world looked like, and he had often tried to imagine its appearance. He caught some impressions of it, too, through the senses of hearing and touch and smell; but oh! it was infinitely more glorious than anything he had dreamed of. It dazzled him; it overpowered and overjoyed him.

Beloved, if the gift of one new physical faculty will add so much to a man's happiness and usefulness in this world, what will not the increase of all our faculties, the expansion of all our powers, bring to us when we awake in the other world in the likeness of the Son of God? Surely, Paul was not indulging in exaggeration when, freely trans-

lating Isaiah, he exclaimed: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." Nor are the well-known lines of Hood in the least extravagant:

"Take all the pleasures of all the spheres
And multiply these by endless years,
One moment of heaven is worth them all."

The first service which Jesus rendered this man, then, was purely physical, but that boon, physical though it was, conferred upon him an incalculable blessing.

II. The second stage in the evolutionary process was a moral one. Added usefulness instantly brought new and solemn responsibility. The gift of this new faculty, so beneficent in its character, had endowed him with an increased capacity for pain. It had introduced him into a new joy, an immeasurable joy, but at the same time it had introduced him into a deep and poignant distress.

In what way? Revert to the narrative. No sooner had he left the pool with his eyes opened, leaping and singing for joy, than his

neighbors began to ply him with questions. "How were thine eyes opened?" "Who did it?" "What sayest thou of Him?" Thus he found himself face to face with the necessity of accounting for what had happened to him. A tremendous problem was fastening its grip upon him. You can fairly see his contortions as he struggles to free himself from its toils. He is set to thinking; thought leads to wonder, and wonder to reasoning, and reasoning brings moral confusion. He cannot think it out for himself.

He was indeed in a new world—new to his mind as well as to his eyes, and no stranger to his senses than to his soul. The one was as hard to comprehend as the other. His neighbors taunted and tantalized him with his ignorance, and when out of simple justice he began to speak a good word for his benefactor, they reviled him and finally cast him out. He had only stepped from one difficulty into another, and the moral predicament into which he had come was even worse than the physical disability from which he had emerged. He had been given physical sight, but that served only to disclose to him his

inner darkness. His soul had been thrown into a state of ethical confusion.

Was he tempted to think it would have been better had he stayed blind? Perhaps so. That would have been natural. But would such a conclusion have been warrantable? Is it psychologically sound, to say nothing of its spiritual aspect, for anyone to declare it were better that the heathen were left to their native darkness than to be brought into the light and into the possibility of sinning against the light? When this man began to struggle with the problem pressed in upon him, he started at once to climb to a higher plane of life. His ethical sense was awakened, and for the first time actually asserted itself. His moral horizon began to expand. He found his manhood. Life was no longer a mere existence, such as it had been to him hitherto in his effort through begging to keep soul and body together. Life was a far-reaching, ethical reality, involving the greatest issues and fraught with tremendous responsibility.

III. It was when the man was at this juncture that Jesus sought him out again. He

had left him purposely, and had been waiting only for this situation to develop. Finding him, Jesus put to him the question instantly, abruptly, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" You have expressed your judgment about Me, but mere ideas are not enough—they have never saved anyone. What you need is conviction. It is convictions, not sentiments, that will deliver a man in your estate. I do not ask what you think of Me, or how you feel toward Me—of course, you are thinking good thoughts of Me and feeling emotions of gratitude toward Me. Dost thou believe on the Son of God?

The man, dazed even more than when the restoration of his eyesight came to him, at once replied: "Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?" "I want to believe and I must believe something; I must be rightened, or I had rather go back to my former blindness. Help me, Rabbi, I am in great distress. My soul is in tumult and will not be stilled." And Jesus, seizing the situation, as only Jesus knew how to do, knowing the man was now ready for the revelation, answered, "Thou hast both seen Him, and it

is He that talketh with thee." And a light flooding the man's soul ten times more luminous and effulgent than broke into his eyes when physical sight came, and finding hope and joy and deliverance in its ministry, he exclaimed, "Lord, I believe. And he worshipped Him."

This was the blind man's spiritual history, and it marks, as I have already intimated, the evolutionary stages of a normal spiritual experience. God has given you some physical boon, and it has made life many times more enjoyable to you. You have come into the possession of wealth, and wealth has unlocked for you new worlds of pleasure and possibility. You wonder how you ever got on without money. A little life has been sent into your home, and you have said a thousand times since that life was not living before baby came. You were fortunate enough to get a college education, and how it has widened for you the horizon of life! You have been cured of some disease that was hanging over you; the surgeon's knife, perhaps, removed some weakness completely and gave you a freedom from pain, a liberty of

action you had never known before. Or you are gifted with health and vigor above your fellows. Life has for you peculiar zest and enjoyment.

So far the Great Giver's favor has been a blessing, but with the blessing has come new responsibility, larger problems, higher obligations. The outside world, learning of your wealth and acting upon the suggestion that your wealth was a trust, has begun to bombard you with appeals. You are less independent and less at ease than when you were poorer. Baby came "trailing clouds of glory," but what care, what anxious and solicitous responsibility he also brought with him! How can I train this life aright? How can I keep the little spark from being extinguished? you are asking, and you never get a full night's sleep now, and never is there a day but your nerves are taut with anxiety and concern. That college education has brought to you ambitions and obligations you did not foresee when you entered college; and your restoration to perfect health, or your native vigor, has entailed special obligations, home cares, religious demands, which now press their way

in upon you. If afflictions are blessings in disguise, so are blessings afflictions in disguise.

Don't you recognize God's purpose? He has been dealing intelligently, wisely, logically, with you. You had your eye upon the physical, and were inclined to be satisfied with and absorbed in that, but His eye all the while has been upon something higher and farther on, to which the physical was but antecedent and preparatory.

And having disturbed rather than quieted you, having brought you to exchange your one simple problem for a hundred complex ones, having confronted you with duties, responsibilities, exactions, and even temptations you were a stranger to before, in other words, having led you by way of the material into the seriously moral, and awakened within you a sense of the reality, the complexity, the responsibility, the eternity of human life, He then presents Himself before you, and asks you to find in Him your deliverer from your moral bondage, even as He had proved Himself your deliverer from your physical disability.

Your only hope, make sure of it, lies not in having ideas of Christ, or sentiments about Christ, but in convictions concerning Him. "Believe in Me," is His word. Make Me your Teacher, your Master, your Redeemer; relate yourself to Me vitally, ethically, spiritually; let Me become your guide and governor and goal; dedicate that wealth to Me and let Me share the responsibility of distributing it; regard that child as Mine and let his spiritual training be your chief concern; consecrate that education, that restored health, or that native vigor to Me; bring your questions to Me to answer; your duties to Me to help you fulfill them; your cares to Me that I may share them; your burdens to Me that I, too, may put My shoulder under them, and I will lead you out into a gladder, grander sphere of life. Your mind will have a new vision as well as your physical being, and your soul as well as your mind. Your horizon will widen and widen until it sweeps the circle of eternity. Oh, Jesus is our Saviour for this life as well as for the life to come!

Dost thou personally, actually, fully believe on the Son of God?

“I have a life in Christ to live,
But ere I live it must I wait
Till learning can clear answer give
To this or that book's date?
I have a life in Christ to live,
I have a death in Christ to die;
But must I wait till science give
All doubts their full reply?

“Nay, rather, while the sea of doubt
Is raging wildly round about
Questionings of life or death or sin,
Let me but creep within
Thy fold, O Christ, and at Thy feet
Take the lowest seat,
And hear Thine awful voice repeat
In gentlest accents, heavenly sweet,
'Come unto Me and rest;
Believe Me and be blest.'”

*THE CHURCH IN A
NEW LIGHT*

*“For we are made a spectacle unto
the world, and to angels, and to men.”*

I Corinthians iv. 9

THE CHURCH IN A NEW LIGHT

WHY the translators should have used the word spectacle here it is not easy to say. Paul's word did not need translating, and in their attempt to render it they have only confused his meaning, and quite hidden his metaphor from sight. The original word was theater, and you will find that given in the margin of your Bibles for an alternate rendering. Read the verse with this substituted, and see how striking the idea to which the Apostle gives expression: *For we are made a theater unto the world, and to angels, and to men.*

We often hear of turning a theater temporarily into a church, but here St. Paul turns the church permanently into a theater. It is

the same idea which the author of the Hebrews makes use of in the opening of the twelfth chapter: *Seeing we are compassed about by so great a cloud of witnesses*, with this difference, that there the Christian is thought of as running a race in the presence of an audience gathered in a stadium, while here he is represented as producing a play in the sight of a concourse of people assembled in a theater.

It is this kind of a theater I would like to say a word about. Not the one you go to, or wonder whether you should go to, in order to see others act, but the theater to which others come to see you act. You may stay away from the world's playhouse on principle, as I do, but this is a playhouse you cannot deny others the right to attend.

I. Who are the actors in this theater? One would suppose upon the first reading of this Scripture, or the tenth reading, if superficial, that Paul was referring here solely to the apostles; but a close reading convinces us that he is not thinking of any particular class, but of all the disciples of Christ without distinction. In any case, are we not all apos-

bles? This is the order: Called out of the world; separated from the world; kept in the midst of the world; sent back into the world; saved with the world. Everyone who has named the name of Jesus and is allied with the Church and Kingdom is an actor. Out in the world it is an unusual thing for a person to go on the stage; when anyone does it always raises a question and provokes criticism; but there is no choice with the Christian; whether he will or not, he is assigned to the stage. We are all born actors when we come into the Kingdom.

Some figure more prominently before the audience than others, but there are no minor parts. It is given everybody to impersonate one and the same character, to represent, yes, to reproduce, the life and character of Jesus of Nazareth. Christ impersonates the Father, and we impersonate Christ—how it makes one tremble to think of it! There are people in the world—how startling the truth when thus boldly stated—who will never know more of Christ than we exhibit to them. “I must seek the salvation of my classmates as if there were not another one to do it,” young

Taylor, of Princeton, that remarkable soul-winner, was in the habit of saying to himself. How can we keep from spurring ourselves on in the selfsame way when we realize our responsibilities as the impersonators of Jesus Christ? Well might Jonathan Edwards' sixty-third resolution be ours: "On the supposition that there never was to be but one individual in the world at any one time who was properly a complete Christian, in all respects of a right stamp, having Christianity always shining in its true luster, and appearing excellent and lovely, from whatever part and under whatever character viewed: Resolved, to act just as I would do if I strove with all my might to be that one who should live in my time."

Beloved, is the presentation of Jesus Christ which the Church is making to-day weaker or stronger because of your acting? Pope's famous line we are justified in interpolating: "Act well thy part, there all the honor [of Jesus Christ] lies."

II. And what is it we are playing? We have already seen that it is a character sketch—the impersonation of Christ before the age

and community of which we are a part. It is also a great moral play, in which we are showing to the world the effect of our religion upon human character and conduct—what sort of men and women it produces, what power it has to sweeten our spirits and make pure and noble our lives. Every performance gives an impression for or against Christianity.

And it is a tragedy, depicting to the great audience of onlookers how the Gospel enables us to meet sorrow and disaster and death, and be brave and steadfast and calm in the midst of the adverse things of life. Not long ago a family, recently bereaved under the heaviest stroke of God's corrective rod, sat in their accustomed pew at service. Remembering how many Christians abandon the Church when sorrow comes to them, and turn away from their religion as if it were then the last thing to put dependence upon, I wondered at their presence in church. Still more did I wonder when they arose and sang the congregational hymns. Turning to the minister who sat with me in the pulpit, a relative of theirs, I expressed surprise, and he answered: "They

are Christian people, and their only comfort is the Church and the Gospel. Why should they stay away from service, or, coming, refuse to join in the worship?" Who will say that the minister was wrong? That family were doing more for Christianity by their fortitude and their simple, practical faith than a hundred sermons could have done. Thousands never come to church to hear the Gospel preached that daily see it visibly lived. Oh! the responsibility of it! God press it down more and more heavily upon our hearts!

III. Now, as to the audience. Who are the spectators? Different types, of course, as in every body of auditors.

(1) The world is named first. Not the world of people, but of nature—the cosmos. Elsewhere Paul speaks of the whole creation *waiting* for the manifestation of the sons of God. Here he represents the whole creation as *watching* that manifestation. And is that not what the universe is doing—observing the effect of redeeming love upon the sons of men? All the rest of creation has been obedient, man alone having rebelled against his

Creator. That rebellion God has mercifully overlooked, and at great sacrifice sought to overturn, sending His own Son to lead us back into submission and rest. And the Creation, wondering at such mercy, is watching to see the result. It expects man, from sheer gratitude, to turn back to God, and live thenceforth in dutiful sonship. How interesting the spectacle! No theater play could be more engaging than this whole problem is to the cosmos.

(2) The heavenly intelligences come next into sight as the apostle looks forth from the stage into the great audience. He does not speak of God as a spectator, but, without question, the Creator is the most interested auditor of all. When Beethoven's symphonies were produced, their composer, we are told, was always the person most eager and alert in all the opera house. Every brilliant play elated him and every mistake pained him as no one else in the audience. God's interest in the drama of Christianity as it is being rendered by us is that of the composer. And that interest is enhanced by the fact that He is the fond father of those who are taking

part. You recall with what concern and pleasure you sat through the school exhibition when your boy used to declaim. That is God's feeling, only many times multiplied, as He watches your rendering of Christianity. How seldom is He pleased! How often is He pained and humiliated! We have a great deal to say about the joy of heaven. Would that we thought more of its pain—the sorrow which our blunders and misrepresentations bring to the anxious heart of our observing Father.

Were we not prepared to have the angels pointed out to us in this tier of the auditorium? Peter tells us they desire to *look into* these things, and here Paul says they are *looking upon* them—studying the history of redemption, seeing how those for whom God has shown a greater love than for the rest of His creatures, receive it and what response they are making to it.

(3) And last of all, he calls our attention to the great company of men who make up the audience. They are the most important part of the whole company, for it is not so much a question as to whether they are duly

impressed and pleased, as in the case of the rest of the audience, but their souls' salvation is involved. They are being won to Christ or turned against Him by what they see and hear in this theater.

There, right in front, sit the scoffers with their magnifying glasses watching our every movement, and, oh, how they jeer when we make a break or take a misstep upon the stage! There are the haters of God, the infidels, the skeptics, the blasphemers, only waiting for a chance to hurl some new jibe at religion. There sit, too, great rows of inquirers, honest seekers after truth, who would know whether these things are so or not. Whole sections are filled with little children and young men and women, getting their first impressions of the Christian life, and forming judgment as to whether it is worth while. Said a little child mysteriously of Robert Falconer, judging from his life: "I know who that is; I think he must be Jesus Christ." Said a poor tenement woman, calling her tiny daughter to the window to see a missionary who for years had been at work in the slums, "There goes a Christ." Said

Dr. Trumbull's little girl after Henry F. Durand, who had been on a visit in the home, had gone, "Papa, the very name of Jesus sounds sweeter when that man speaks it." What are they saying about you, fellow-actor? Think more of your audience! Think more of those magnifying glasses that are looking your way! Think more and oftener of the souls whom you are all the while pointing to or away from Jesus Christ.

"'Tis not for us to trifle—
Life is brief and sin is here.
Our age is but the falling of a leaf,
The dropping of a tear.
Not many lives, but only one, have we.
How sacred should that one life be!
We have no time to sport away the hours.
All must be earnest in a world like ours."

THE SECRET OF JESUS'
LIFE

*“ For I came down from heaven, not
to do Mine own will, but the will of Him
that sent Me.”*

John vi. 38

*“ My meat is to do the will of Him
that sent Me.”*

John iv. 34

*“ Because I seek not Mine own will,
but the will of the Father which hath
sent Me.”*

John v. 30

*“ I do always those things that please
Him.”*

John viii. 29

THE SECRET OF JESUS' LIFE

THERE are four Scriptures, all the sayings of Jesus and all found in the Fourth Gospel, which define for me the basic secret of Jesus' life. John vi. 38—"For I came down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me"—doing the will of God the *purpose* of Christ's life. John iv. 34—"My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me"—doing the will of God the *pleasure* of Christ's life, its very sustenance and inspiration, its enjoyment and satisfaction. John v. 30—"Because I seek not Mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent Me"—doing the will of God the *pursuit* or *principle* of Christ's life. John viii. 29—"I do always

those things that please Him"—doing the will of God the *practice* of Christ's life.

This was our Lord's unique and unqualified claim. Was it substantiated? Did He give full proof to the world that doing God's will was the purpose, the pleasure, the pursuit and the practice of His life? That He always diligently sought to know and earnestly set Himself to do God's will is beyond dispute. A study of His prayer-life fully attests this. "Strong Son of God" though He was, aware of His appointed mission in the world as He must have been, yet was He constantly asking His Father what direction His way should take or what turns in the way already taken He should make. "What wilt Thou have Me to do?" was His perpetual inquiry.

If ever anyone had less need than another to pray, was it not Jesus Christ? And yet we find that no one living upon our earth ever prayed so much as did He. He alone has perfectly obeyed the apostolic injunction, "Pray without ceasing." Prayer stood closely related to all the great events of His life—His baptism, His temptation, His transfiguration, His agony in the garden, His crucifix-

ion. The night before He chose the twelve He was until morning in the mountain alone with His Father. When the Roman guard came to arrest Him He was by Himself in prayer, and did He not die with a prayer upon His lips? What a testimony to His prayer-life it was that the disciples who took the walk to Emmaus with Him the day of His resurrection did not identify Him till they heard His voice in prayer. We sometimes feel that at best we are but children and dare not stir a step alone. This was Jesus' characteristic and continuous attitude. He was supremely the son of solitude, yet He was pre-eminently a man among men, ever going about doing good.

This constant converse with His Father was the source of His wisdom, His patience and poise, His steadfastness and strength, His cheerfulness and courage. It was this which made

“His face a mirror of His holy mind,
His mind a temple for all lovely things to flock to
And inhabit.”

Living such an uninterrupted prayer-life as

this, He came to know the will of God fully and explicitly, and His life was lived with one sole commanding passion—to make that will known to men. The words He spoke, the deeds He wrought, the influence breathing itself forth from His person, His character and life, were but the utterance, the exaltation of that will. In whatsoever capacity He appears, as the Messiah of Matthew, or the servant of Mark, or the universal Saviour of Luke, or the divine Son of God of John, He is everywhere and always the synonym, the embodiment, the interpretation of the will of God—the declaration of what God thinks, what God desires, what He purposes and what He delights in—in a word, what God is and what He desires man to be.

“On one great mission bent,
He sped for God, forever unencumbered
Of earthly clogs, whereby our souls are numbered,
In glory excellent.”

There can be no question, then, but that He always sought to know and follow the will of the Father. That stands forever true. But did He perfectly do that will? In other

words, it is beyond dispute that doing the will of God was the *purpose*, the *pleasure* and the *pursuit* of His life. Was this the actual *practice* of Jesus?

1. The consciousness of Christ is no slight or uncertain factor in this problem. All the laws of psychology must, do give it emphasis. A sane, true, high soul, such as Jesus confessedly was, could have had none other than a trustworthy consciousness. When, therefore, looking into the face of His Father, He said: "I do always the things that please Him," and again, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me," He established the strongest possible presumption in favor of His claim.

2. Another test is His Father's unqualified approval of Him. This approval would, of course, not have been given if He had failed to do the will of God. That approval is everywhere implied, and the fact that only once did Jesus feel Himself without it, and that when circumstances for which He was not responsible had clouded His consciousness, strongly confirms the implication. Twice, however, this approval was explicitly

spoken by the Father from heaven. First, at the baptism : " This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased," a word which doubtless covered the whole of His life up to that point and is a suggestive key which unlocks for us the so-called " hidden years "; and again at the transfiguration, when, as St. Peter tells us, " He received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (2 Peter i. 17.)

3. But better than His self-consciousness even, still better than His Father's implied or spoken approval, was the sinless life He set before the world. His sinlessness was more than a self-preferred claim—it was an accepted fact. No man did convict Him of sin. The prince of this world did come, but found nothing in Him. His contemporaries testified to His purity, and succeeding ages have confirmed the testimony.

In view of these facts are we not justified in accepting it as an absolute fact that Jesus did perfectly obey His Father, and that His claim is thus firmly established, that doing

the will of God was not only the purpose, the pleasure and the pursuit of His life, but also its actual and constant practice? No other soul was equal to Wasson's quaint confession as was the Man of Galilee:

"If I would pray,
I've naught to say
But this: That God would be God still.
For grace to live,
So still to give,
And sweeter than my wish His will."

Is not our next logical question this: What was the personal, practical product of such perfect practicing of the will divine? What sort of a character-structure did it rear? What type or pattern did it leave to the world? In a word, what kind of a life did it produce? Theoretically, the effect of such a practicing of the will of God should have been the ideal, the perfect. If the will of God is the best possible will, if it justifies the Bible's representations of it as "that good and acceptable and perfect will" of God, if John's dictum be true, "He that doeth the will of God abideth forever," then three things may be demanded of such a person:

1. That the perfect doing of that perfect will of God shall produce the highest possible character. Why? Because God is the Creator, and only He can make such laws as, when obeyed, will insure one's being its highest end.

2. That the perfect doing of the perfect will of God shall bring the greatest possible happiness. God is the great Father, and He would make only those laws for His children which, on being obeyed, would contribute to their fullest happiness.

3. That the perfect doing of the perfect will of God shall result in the longest possible continuance of being. God is eternal, and legislates, therefore, only for eternity. God is man's great benefactor, and, where His will is not intercepted, must preserve my soul "from this time forth and even forevermore."

What do we find to have been the case in our Lord's life? Did He not fulfill each of these three great conditions? He was not only the noblest, the purest, the holiest character of time, but He is the only perfect man our race has produced. Human imagination

can picture to itself no higher order of being than He. Do not the Norseman's title of "The White Christ," and Lanier's representation of Him as "The Crystal Christ" command universal consent?

What of the second test? Did not perfect obedience to the Father's will yield Him complete happiness? He was "the man of sorrows," but He was "anointed with the oil of gladness" above His fellows. He was able to rise above more trial, temptation, opposition and hatred than has come to any other being on our earth, and yet He was calm, serene, brave, and glad through it all. "Who, for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." (Heb. xii. 2.)

Apply the third test—the longest possible existence. Is He not by all odds the first of the immortals? Was not death powerless to hold Him? Is He not now alive forevermore? Has He not the keys of Hades and death? He who rests his faith in Him may sing with the utmost confidence:

"To Thy beyond no fear I give;
Because Thou livest, I live.
Unsleeping Friend, why should I wake
Troublesome thought to take
For any strange to-morrow? In Thy hand
Days and eternities like flowers expand.

"Odors from blossoming worlds unknown
Across my path are blown;
Thy robes trail myrrh and spice
From farthest Paradise;
I walk through Thy fair universe with Thee,
And sun me in Thine immortality."

And now, having reached this high point, where are we? We have looked upon His claim that God's will was the guiding star, nay, the rising sun, of His life; we have examined the facts upon which that master claim rests, and assured ourselves that it was warrantable and conclusive. We have scrutinized the effect of Christ's obedience and found it yielded a normal product, answering the soul's threefold aspiration for a perfect, happy and continuing existence. Are we not, therefore, face to face with the question as to what is the essential, practical import of all this for us? Surely it can have but one explicit and ethical meaning. It is this: that if we would come out at a like goal, we must

take the same path Jesus chose. Do we want to attain to the highest character? Do we want abiding happiness? Do we crave a true immortality? All this has but one secret—doing the will of the Father in heaven. Until Christ's secret is ours we shall not fulfill the genius of our being; we shall chafe and fret, be ill at ease and generally unhappy; and the life within us instead of expanding will grow shallow and negative and gradually die out.

Ah! this is our difficulty. Our wills are in command, and not God's will. Victor Hugo once said, "Men do not lack strength, but will." And it is God's will they lack. By so much as that will is not ours, by so much our characters are defective, our hearts discordant, our lives devitalized. No one has got closer to this truth, it would seem to me, than our Quaker poet, who has in a single verse forever signalized the thought:

"And so I sometimes think our prayers
Might well be merged in one;
And nest and perch and hearth and church
Repeat, 'Thy will be done.'"

This step but leads to another. Having

come face to face with this secret of secrets, we ask most eagerly how we may make it ours. How may we be sure that we have taken God's will? We do well to ask that question, for there is a great deal of talk in these days about absolute surrender which is ignorant, unscriptural, unphilosophical, and generally wide of the mark. In many quarters the word surrender has become scarcely more than a shibboleth. People talk glibly of surrender who do not know what surrender means.

(1) To begin with, it is not a thing of the emotions, but solely of the will. It is, therefore, a step to be taken deliberately, dispassionately, and, above all, positively. I have known people to declare their surrender when they were under excited feeling, who were at the time as little capable of taking so serious a step as a child.

(2) It is a thing of fact and not fancy. A prominent religious teacher, speaking to a great conference of Christian people a few years ago, suggested that only when one could sign his name to a blank sheet of paper and hand it back to God for Him to fill in

as He chose, was he really justified in professing surrender. I submit that this is a specious test, and its effect most unwholesome. Imagine Christ working Himself up into such an unreal state. He dealt with the will of God as it came to Him at the time, and not as it might address itself to Him at some future juncture. The call which God's will makes to us in the present is the only true test of surrender. God has put me in a hard place; do I accept it from Him and in no way fight against the appointment? My position is not what I like, but God keeps me in it. Am I content therewith? My life is an aimless, circumscribed one—a treadmill, a tedious round, the dead level of the commonplace. Am I willing to keep on and be cheerful, if God does not turn me upon another path?

(3) And this, mark you well, is only the first step—the beginning. Surrender, as I understand it, is a compound act—I had almost said a complex act. It is a ladder of three rungs, set far apart and mounted only by long, hard strides. The first rung is *submission* to God's will—resignation, as we more commonly express it. The second is

obedience to God's will. Not merely accepting it negatively, as if there were no other alternative, but giving ourselves gladly, fully, loyally to its fulfillment. The third is *exalting* God's will—accounting it and rejoicing in it as the best possible will. Faber was standing on this top rung when he breathed that immortal prayer:

“I worship Thee, sweet will of God,
And all thy ways adore;
And every day I live, I seem
To love Thee more and more.

“He always wins who sides with God;
To him no chance is lost.
God's will seems sweetest to him when
It triumphs at his cost.

“Ill that He blesses is our good,
And unblest good is ill;
And all is right that seems most wrong,
If it be His sweet will.”

How many of us have brought our feet to that rung? Until we have, we cannot make claim to full surrender to the will of God, but if we have reached that high and holy station, we are fast becoming our truest

and best selves; it will be easy to be brave and sweet and reposeful, and natural for us to be happy; and we shall rise above all ordinary temporal limitations, passing out of the bondage of the material into the glorious life and liberty of the sons of God.

*THE PLACE OF FEAR
IN RELIGION*

*“ The fear of the Lord is a fountain
of life.”*

Proverbs xiv. 27

THE PLACE OF FEAR IN RELIGION

THE fear of God is another name for the love of God, they used to tell me when I was a lad. But I could not see it then; I have not been able to see it at any time since; nor do I see it now. It has always been possible—even in the days of my childhood it was so—to understand how the fear of God leads to the love of God, since we can love no one whom we do not first respect and honor; but to believe that love can take the place of fear, or that love is the same thing as fear, seems to-day, as it has ever seemed, an impossibility, yes, an absurdity.

That I am right, certain scriptures, whose meaning is unmistakable, make it more than

certain. In them it is perfectly plain that holy men enjoined a feeling toward God such as is ordinarily implied by the word fear. "Let all the earth fear the Lord; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him." (Ps. xxxiii. 8.) Fear, there, obviously, does not mean love, but awe. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." (Phil. ii. 12.) Fear implies, in this case, something that makes one tremble. Has love that effect? "Let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: for our God is a consuming fire." (Heb. xii. 28.) Fear, in this instance, expresses itself in reverence, and it is the realization that God is a consuming fire that awakens it.

But not only is it scriptural to believe that the fear of God is a different thing from the love of God; reason and experience both tell us that it is. Fear and love ever bestir different faculties in our being. They are never identical emotions in our relations to any other person; why should they be in our relations to God? Our respect for our parents when we were children produced a totally dif-

ferent sensation from our love for them. The same difference follows from the fear and the love of God. One springs from a contemplation of His sterner qualities and begets reverence and awe; the other from meditating upon the milder qualities of His nature and gives rise to love. If we have no place in our religion for the fear of God, we apprehend but one side of God's nature, and He is to us, whether we realize it or not, neither a normal nor a perfect being, and therefore not God in the truest and fullest sense.

Therefore the people who magnify the mercy of God and minimize, or, as some do, blot out His majesty, not only have a one-sided, partial religion, but their God is only a fraction of the true God. Their ideas of Him are disproportionate, incomplete, and their response to Him cannot therefore be altogether normal or true.

And it is in this very direction that the tendency of the times is leading us. "Preach the love of God and let the law go," is the clamor of the day. "Men can be led, but not driven. A religion that a man is frightened into is a poor kind of a religion to have. That

is the Old Testament, and we want the New. We are encamped not under Mt. Sinai, but under Mt. Calvary, where the message to men is not 'Go and do,' but 'Come and be.' "

Such phrases sound well, but they are specious. As if God ever ceased to speak to the conscience; as if religion could under any conditions resolve itself into simple emotions; as if a man could once take a clear look into the majesty and might of Him who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen or can see, and not feel his own littleness and inferiority; as if a soul could ever truly worship Jehovah and thereafter put His glory out of its thought. Never, beloved, never. And it is yielding to this false trend of the times, this unbalanced talk about the love of God, that has robbed the religion of the day of its virility and left it in some quarters scarcely more than a sentiment or a form.

Not that the love of God should not be preached, believed in, and mused upon always

and fully, but that it should not be allowed to exclude or even overshadow the opposite qualities of His being until we come to think we believe, and try to get others to believe with us, that fearing God and loving God are one and the same thing. You might as well try to say that joy and sorrow are identical; or pain and pleasure; or hope and despair; or hatred and love. Not until God changes—and that will never be—and not until He changes us—and this change He will never make either—can the love of God and the fear of God become the same or change places.

Queen Victoria knew the difference between love and fear, respect and affection, in her children, when she rebuked her son, now King Edward VII, for his undue familiarity in her presence, and bade him remember that, while she was his mother, she was also the Queen of England. If we did not administer such a rebuke occasionally in our homes, what would become of our authority? Nay, not that so much—for as compared with the other this is of little importance—what would

become of our children's characters? Oh! if we did but know it, how God rebukes our familiarity with Him, our forwardness, our lack of reverence, our indifference to His majesty, our disregard of His eternal sovereignty and might, bidding us remember that, while He is our Father and the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, plenteous in mercy "and most wonderfully kind," He is at the same time and always the God of the Universe, the Beginning and the End, the King eternal, immortal, invisible, Jehovah, the great I Am.

The wise man was not wrong, therefore, when he said, "The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life," nor the Psalmist when he wrote, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom," nor the early Christians when, as is recorded of them, they "walked in the fear of the Lord" as well as in "the comfort of the Holy Ghost"; nor the Poet when he prayed, "Unite my heart to fear Thy name"; nor Tennyson when he said that there were times when his only prayer was, "O thou Infinite, Amen"; nor James For-
dyce when back in the last century he replied

to one who had apologized for swearing in his presence, in these rhythmic words:

“Henceforth, the majesty of God revere.
Fear Him, and you have nothing else to fear.”

No, they were none of them wrong, nor am I wrong in pleading for a place in your religious lives for the fear of God—a sharper, clearer vision of the great white Throne, a fuller realization and an oftener thought of the majesty of God, an elevation of the conscience to a higher, more commanding place in your life, a recognition, practical and undivided, not only of the law of love, but of the law behind all love, and without which there could be no love, or if there were it would be too weak, too flabby, too superficial a thing to continue to hold the name. Did you ever sum up the promises which God makes to those who fear Him? Note such as these: “The secret of the Lord is with them that *fear Him*” (Ps. xxv. 14); “The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that *fear Him* and delivereth them” (Ps. xxxiv. 7); “The Lord pitieth them that *fear Him*” (Ps. ciii. 13); “Surely His salvation is nigh them

that *fear* Him" (Ps. lxxxv. 9); "He will fulfill the desire of them that *fear* Him" (Ps. cxlv. 19).

Only throw the plummet down into this fountain and its depth will surprise you.

(1) Humility is one of the issues of the fear of God. How insignificant a man appears to himself when his soul is awed before the glory and holiness of Jehovah! And what sort of a grace is humility? The ancients ranked it as "the head of which all the other virtues together were the body."

(2) Accountability soon springs into life, too, when the fear of God is in control. When justice and judgment come into sight as the habitation of God's throne, we realize how strict is the account we must render at last, and a deep sense of responsibility settles into the soul.

(3) Flowing from the same spring is a current called faith. No matter how much I may love God, how can I trust Him if I do not realize His might? It is the Throne that gives the Cross its background, putting power behind it and efficiency into it. Had it been any other than "the mighty God, the

everlasting Father," who died for our salvation, how limited that salvation would have been. Not till I fear God can I fully trust Him.

(4) And strange as it may seem—yet why strange?—true love has its source in the fear of God. I look upon the Throne and behold the glory of Him who sits upon it, a glory that dazzles my sight and makes my soul tremble before its whiteness, and then I look over to the Cross and behold its Victim, and this is my exclamation: "Did God come all that way for me! Are yonder Monarch and yonder Victim one and the same! Such condescension is stupendous. Love like this is a glorious, majestic, awful thing."

"There's a wideness in God's mercy,
Like the wideness of the sea."

Of such love I am unworthy. It humbles me. It makes me tremble. I fear God, and I love Him the more because I do fear Him.

When one thus traces the lineage of the fear of God, he understands what Paul meant when he spoke of "perfecting holiness in the

fear of God" (II Cor. vii. 1). Without it we shall grow a race of bastards with no fear of God before their eyes; with it ours will become a sturdy and virile Christianity that shall have true life within it and the full power of God upon it.

SOUL RE-WINNING

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“For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.”

II Peter ii. 20-21

SOUL RE-WINNING

A DISTINGUISHED clergyman of New York City, in addressing a representative body of Metropolitan Christians not long since, made the somewhat startling statement that the greatest problem which the church of to-day had to solve was not to save sinners but saints. The surprise which his remark at first awakened was lessened, if not dissipated altogether, when he went on to declare his meaning to be that there was a great tier of earnest-minded, right-living men and women who believed in Jesus Christ, respected Him, and secretly desired to follow Him, but who held themselves altogether aloof from the church, refusing in any way to affiliate with its organizations or to

identify themselves with its enterprises, and that to make any impression upon them or to persuade them to give anything like a positive response to the church's overtures, was far more difficult than to evangelize the hardened classes, such as the inebriate or the libertine, and commit them to a religious life.

Who is prepared to contravene this clergyman's statement as thus interpreted by himself? The drift away from the church to-day is one of the appalling religious facts of our times. Saddening as it is to see a chasm yawning between the great unbelieving world and the church, yet to witness a breach steadily widening between our Christian institutions and people whom one cannot really classify as of the world, whose traditions and whose convictions are all Christian, who by good rights belong with us and should be marching shoulder to shoulder with us in the conquest of this generation for Christ, is a condition even more deplorable, presenting, confessedly, a problem so intricate and a task so difficult as to seem well-nigh discouraging.

This exodus from the church is in some quarters a veritable stampede. Such surely

it is in our great cities. People who were once most punctilious in their attendance upon public worship, and who still call themselves Christians, think nothing of absenting themselves altogether from the services of the church, and have no compunction in allowing their children to grow up, not only without any Sunday School training—that is not so strange, considering the character of much of our teaching there—but without any religious instruction as its substitute. Speak to them about this dereliction, and they will not offer an excuse, as was formerly their usual rule, but they will defend their course and maintain with evident sincerity that they no longer regard church attendance as an essential factor of the Christian life.

This tendency operates chiefly with the two extremes of society, though the great intermediate class is by no means free from its influence. There is very little church attendance among Protestant servants, while the American workingman is notoriously a religious alien. Conditions are, if possible, even more discouraging at the opposite social pole. It would almost seem that the more command-

ing one's social, commercial, or intellectual position, the looser and the more negative his relation to the church. How little do our university faculties contribute to the organized life or work of our city churches! How seldom the mantle of a large giver falls, in the event of his decease, upon the shoulders of a worthy successor! Nowhere is this drift more noticeable than in our newer residential districts, where people just coming into wealth find new and better homes.

Is not the task of reaching and winning these people as difficult as any that could come to our hand? They are of all others the most self-satisfied and self-sufficient. They would spurn as a base reflection any intimation that they are not Christian people. They are trading upon their past religious credit, pointing to what they once were in the church, or what they once did for the church, as the passport into perpetual religious ease and indifference. Converting the heathen, redeeming the confirmed and notoriously wicked, is as nothing compared with re-winning these present-day quasi-saints.

Up to this point we have had in mind

those who at present are outside of our churches. What do we find within the church? At least three classes that need re-winning.

(1) A large body of men and women—chiefly men—living excellent lives and breathing a noble spirit, who love the things of Christ as much as we do or could, but who decline to be actively associated either with the membership or the work of the church. Were they living sinful lives, you could appeal to their consciences and induce repentance; but the fact is they are as good, as true, as sincere, as moral as the people who honor the institutions and ordinances of the church, indeed, in many cases far more so, and to win them to your position is as hard a task as the Christian worker finds.

(2) The second class consists of those who have formally connected themselves with the church, but since that time their attitude toward it has been that of the man who said he had so much respect for the truth that he seldom used it. Their names are upon our books—in the retired rolls, it is to be hoped—and they do occasionally turn up, oftener at

some social than religious function, but they are practically the unchurched within the church, and they will have to be re-won to Christ before they can be made His faithful followers or His worthy representatives. It would seem a heterodox thing to speak of a second conversion, but something very like unto that will have to take place before you can account such people saved.

(3) The third class is made up of those who go through all the motions of the religious life, are faithful in their relations to the church, but whose religion, as Carlyle describes it, is only "algebraic piety"—the symbol without the substance, or, as Browning calls it with equal aptness, "Dramatic Christianity," playing, not living religion. Such ones, if they have ever known Jesus Christ as a great reality, have receded from that high point, and must be re-won if they are to have an experience that is either deep or real.

Where, now, are we to locate the responsibility for this unfortunate trend of the age? There are those who refer it entirely to the temper of the times. This, say they, is a

commercial age, and the last thing people are interested in is laying up treasures in heaven. Or it is a pleasure-seeking age, given to self-gratification and self-indulgence, and it finds no congeniality, of course, in a religion of self-denial and cross-bearing. Or an age of loose thinking, in which the inclination is to bank everything spiritual upon the love of God and let the future settle its own accounts. Or it is declared to be a selfish age, so bent upon what is immediately advantageous that eternity with its remote and invisible interests fails to address to men any strong or winsome appeal.

All this may accurately describe the age—doubtless in general outline it is a faithful photograph—but to me it seems far wide of the mark as a contribution to the solution of the problem before us. Suppose the age is not favorable to our conquest, and the conditions untoward. What else might we expect? And with the equipment we carry as the host of the Lord are we justified in resting all the blame for failure there? Did not Christianity contend against greater odds in the first century, the third, the eighth, the sixteenth

and eighteenth centuries, and yet in every instance conquer and conquer gloriously? Has the church of Christ had its commission withdrawn since then? Is the gospel of redemption less the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth?

If a remedy that has lost none of its virtue ceases to produce its former results, where must the fault be placed but upon the one administering it? With the same gospel in its hand, the same Spirit vouchsafed unto it, the same redeeming purpose behind it, and the same sign upon its banners, if the church is failing to-day, it is hers to accuse and not to excuse herself.

“Dark is the world to thee?
Thyself is the reason why,”

may well be her soliloquy. Her method must be defective, or her face in the wrong direction, or she has been stripped of her power. Something surely is wanting, and she could do nothing better just now—indeed, she will be driven to it in self-defense or for self-preservation—than to give herself to the sharpest, deepest self-examination, repenting

of her discovered shortcomings in sackcloth and ashes.

There are not less than four great requirements which, in my judgment, must be squarely met by the church of to-day before it will be able to do this work of soul re-winning as it should be done and as it is possible to do it.

I. It must live a more winsome life before these people, before all people. Is it not a common saying these days—we must all confess to hearing it on every hand—that there seems little, if any, difference between those belonging to the world and those who belong to the church? “The meanest, smallest, least scrupulous men I meet,” said a prominent citizen of this city to me the other day, “are church people.” This may be an extreme statement, but that it has a broader basis to rest upon than we will ordinarily admit to others, is more than certain.

Nor can we find relief in the reflection, doubtless in itself a warrantable one, that the average Christian of to-day lives a cleaner, higher, nobler life than did the average Christian of a century ago. That ought to be most

markedly the case with the superior advantages, the nobler ideals, the richer influences that are his. The fact is a church with half of our present membership, yes, one-tenth, made up of consecrated souls on fire with God, on fire for God, carrying His light about with them in their faces, His love radiating out from their lives, would do far more to win lost souls and re-win lapsed souls than the church of to-day will ever be able to do, with all its numbers and all its machinery, but weighed down under the incubus of so many contradictory, if not incriminating, lives.

II. The church is bound to preach a more winsome gospel, if she would do this work of soul re-winning. I do not mean by this that the pulpit should give itself more completely to the theme of God's love—I shall surely not be misunderstood when I say that our evangelical ministers are emphasizing the love of God with sufficient, if not undue, faithfulness. There is altogether too much preaching among us which tends to emasculate the fatherhood of God.

No, I would not by any means place the accent here. The people in every age, and in

none more than in this, have demanded three notes in the chord which the pulpit is set to sound:

(1) The first of these is certainty—a conviction of the truth he utters which commands the preacher to the core. “That which you believe with all your soul and with all your might and all your strength, and are ready to face Tophet for—that for you,” said Carlyle, “is the truth.” Any other kind of preaching repels men—in the nature of the case it cannot win them.

“That which issues from the heart alone
Will bend the hearts of others to your own.”

(2) The second note is reality—truth which has passed through the preacher’s own experience and evidenced itself in his life.

(3) The third is authority, truth straight from God, a vision seen in the mount and brought by the preacher down to the people on the plain. It is because the pulpit has so seldom for the people a message from God that the people feel so little need of the pulpit. When the ministers of the Word become the prophets of the Lord, speaking

forth what they verily believe, what they have felt in their own hearts, and what they have received of God, the lapsed and the lost will both turn to the church as the doves seek their windows at nightfall.

I find myself less and less sympathetic with those who are worried about the lessening number of candidates for the ministry. To me this is one of the most encouraging signs of the times. Instead of urging a man to enter the ministry, I would help to make this as difficult for him as possible. If there were no obstacles in a candidate's way, I would put some there. When there is a revival of the Pauline "woe" in the pulpit, there will be a mighty revival of the religion of Jesus in our churches.

III. The church will need to turn a more winsome face to the world, if it would do this work which is laid to its hand. What do I mean by that? Recall the schism which still divides the church, much of it based upon non-essentials, and you will know. Observe how the affairs of many, yes, I venture to say, of most of our churches are managed; how suffused they are with a commercial spirit;

how much of narrowness and strife and pettiness still marks their life and labor; how worldly are their people; how essentially of the earth earthy are their enterprises; how much like the running of machinery their organizations, and one of the highest barriers to the work of soul-winning will at once stand out before you. Again and again have I had men of this city tell me that they dared not, after their former experiences, return to active part in the work of the church, lest disenchantment might ensue and their religious lives thereby lose their glow and vigor. With such a face turned toward the unsaved, is it strange that they should fail to be allured churchward?

IV. Still again, if the church would substitute success for failure in this mission of hers, she must do a more winsome work. Say what we may, is it not still true, shamefully true, that the church has assumed an indifferent attitude toward the class we now have in mind, or at least been singularly inactive in their behalf?

(1) How utterly neglectful of discipline she has been in this country! If the age fails to

detect any sharp difference between the church and the world, has it not been in a large degree due to the fact that we have failed to establish and exalt that difference? The tares and the wheat grow together, and nothing this side of the judgment day would seem to threaten their separation. Soul re-winning in many quarters is simply waiting upon church discipline.

(2) How little attention our churches give to Christian nurture! In too many cases we persuade young people and children, with a great show of zeal, to join the church, and then drop them forthwith. Thenceforth they are allowed to go their own way, and that way leads usually straight back to their former habits and associations, and the last estate is, not only as bad, it is worse than the first. Is it too strong a position to take that no church should attempt to make converts until it is prepared to take care of them?

(3) Not only have church discipline and Christian nurture been too sadly wanting among us, but there has been a deplorable lack of personal work with and for the class in question. If there is little individual work

for the individual among the lost, there is even less among the lapsed. How far, as a rule, does the continuing absence of a pew-holder give a pew-neighbor anxiety? New members pass into the church and out again without even our officers feeling any very heavy burden of soul for them. You can get ten men and ten women, yes, a hundred, to do committee work where you can get one to assume the least responsibility for the spiritual well-being of a fellow-member. Women will make social calls on the new people, but you can scarcely hire the most pious of them to make personal work calls either for a lost sheep or for one who is only straying.

A pastor in one of our cities—let his name remain unspoken—noticed recently that one of the young women of his membership showed suspicious signs of slipping away. He did not like the increasing ruddiness of her complexion, and the expensive clothes she was wearing so contradicted the frugality of her home that he was naturally anxious for her. His own efforts in her behalf seemed unavailing, and he felt she needed a woman's touch. He went thereupon to one of his good women,

an active church worker, told her the facts, and asked her to give the young woman especial and immediate attention. She cheerfully accepted the charge and promised faithfully to fulfill it. A whole month elapsed and nothing had been heard from the young woman. Inquiring what had been done, what was the pastor's surprise to learn that his faithful church worker had not yet undertaken her task. She said she had been too busy, but she had not been too busy to attend the theater three times a week since then, to go regularly to her euchre club, nor to spend an afternoon or two a week tramping about making society calls. Failing in this instance, he turned to a second good woman of his church, one who always attended the women's prayer meetings and indulged freely in pious talk. She also made fair promises, but kept them no better than her busy sister. She gave her much church work as an excuse for her neglect. She had plenty of time to get up entertainments, but none to give to an imperiled soul.

Then he made another attempt, this time with a Christian Endeavorer of the zealous type, but she was no prompter in her services

than her predecessors. Finally, in desperation, he turned to a deaconess of the church, and in order to lay the burden heavily upon her heart he quoted to her the third chapter of Ezekiel, and warned her of carrying this young woman's blood upon her conscience. This fourth woman went straightway upon her mission, only to find that matters were far worse than even the pastor had supposed. The young woman could not be found at home—she spent all her evenings out. So the visitor sought her at her place of business, and the diamond rings which bestudded her fingers, the dyed hair, an unmistakable cast in the eye, told the sad story of her ruin. While God's people had been tarrying, playing with the world, or trying to satisfy their consciences with unimportant work, one of His children had been lost to decency, honor and virtue.

“So many tender words and true
We meant to speak, dear heart, to you;
So many things we meant to do,
But we forgot.

“The busy days were full of care,
The long nights fell, and, unaware,
You passed beyond life's leading prayer,
While we forgot.”

ONE STEP AT A TIME

*“And as thy days, so shall thy
strength be.”*

Deuteronomy xxxiii. 25

ONE STEP AT A TIME

A WORD FOR THE NEW YEAR

ONE of the first pictures ever hung upon the walls of my memory—it well-nigh begins the gallery's catalogue, I think—is of our old farm team treading composedly, not to say lazily, the rude, old-fashioned threshing machine. You have seen them many a time—a revolving endless platform set up at such an angle that the horses must continue to tread, and as they do so keep the platform going round and round in wearying succession.

I used to watch the performance for hours—a performance it was to us children, no theater play could have ever been more interesting. As I watched I experienced a growing pity for the horses, and tried to imagine the thoughts which the old nags—to a child

horses always think, and any animal is like unto a human—were thinking the while; thoughts of dread, of protest and of discouragement, I was certain, as they looked forward to the hard, long, tedious round of the day.

I soon found, however, that my pity was misspent. When the time came that the horses slipped out of the human category and took their places, in my thought, among the brute creation, I learned that looking ahead was just what the faithful old beasts didn't do, but that they took one step at a time, and, if they had any mental agitation corresponding to our thought, it was expended upon the act of the immediate moment; and that this was what gave them contentment and saved them from dread, discouragement and protest.

What an object lesson! If there are "sermons in stones and books in the running brooks," there may be helpful homilies even in a creaky threshing machine. No lesson set me in college was ever better learned than this one which our old farm horses, acting as my instructors, taught me in childhood.

One step at a time—that is the lesson for

the new year. You follow a treadmill—the household round, the routine of the office, the monotonous swing of duty's daily scythe? Yes, with most of us in these modern, intense, strenuous days, the threshing machine is not called into service for a month and then put away for the rest of the year, but it is in constant requisition. It is an unbroken tread, tread, and all the while up hill. "Don't look down at the machine; keep looking up," say the horses. "Don't count the steps, but take one step at a time and forget the count." To let a poet talk in the horses' stead:

"Lord, I have often asked
Strength for a year;
I wanted *all* the mists
To disappear,
That I might see my way
And walk therein;
And gird myself with strength
The fight to win.
The summer and the winter
Spread before,
Nor be afraid to climb
The mountains o'er.

"But now I am
A child again,
Fearing the darkness,
And afraid of pain.

A year is *long*;
I am content with *days*;
I want the Lord to govern
All my ways.
What He shall give me
Is enough for me;
I know that as my days
My strength shall be."

This is the course to take toward the manifold, yes, the multiform, uncertainties ahead of us to-day. The word which stands out the boldest in the inscription over the gateway of the new year is that taunting, humbling, unnerving adjective, "unknown." Which of us will be ill, which suffer losses, which be called upon to part with dear ones? What mother shall have to lay her sweet-faced babe away; what daughter shall be obliged to bid her gracious mother good-bye—who knows? All of the future is to all of us one great uncertainty. But God knows, and isn't that enough? How sweet the refrain this morning! We could scarcely do better than let it hum itself into our hearts throughout the day:

"He knows, He knows, my heavenly Father knows,
And tempers every wind that blows."

Better we shouldn't know. How much would it help us if we did? "God kindly veils the way." He meant to shut us up to one step at a time. Then let us be content with the gait. Let's not try to guess the future; 'twould be wild guessing if we did. Let's not even think about it, much less set ourselves to imagining it.

One of our good women was telling me not long since of a young lady she found in bitter tears, who, when she asked her the matter, answered: "Oh I was thinking." "What were you thinking of?" "I was thinking: What if I should be married and should have a sweet baby girl and the baby should get sick and die, booh! hoo! how could I ever bear it!" "Poor, foolish girl!" you say, "she would have strength to watch when the babe fell ill, strength that would surprise her; and courage and hope would come and help her take up her burden and trudge on again. Poor, foolish girl, to work herself into such a useless state." Poor, foolish you! That's what you've done, many a time. That's what you are doing, perhaps, this very morning. Be done with mere senti-

ment at New Year's time. Reason is then our most serviceable faculty. Don't dream; reason it through. Stay out of the clouds. Keep hard down on the commonplace, matter-of-fact earth and reckon with what is just before you. One step at a time!

“To-day, unsullied, comes to thee new born,
To-morrow is not thine;
The sun may cease to shine
For thee, ere earth shall greet its morn.

“Be earnest, then, in thought and deed,
Nor fear approaching night;
Calm comes with evening light,
And hope and peace. To-day thy duty heed!”

But if the New Year opens fraught with so many uncertainties, it has also in store for us experiences about which we may be quite as sure as we are doubtful regarding the others, and “one step at a time” is the method to pursue toward these. We all start forth upon the life of the year as Paul told the Ephesian elders he began his journey to Jerusalem. You remember his word (Acts xx. 22): “And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that

shall befall me there, save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me." Though we do not know what shall *befall* us this twelve-month, we do know what *abides* us therein. Toil, struggle, responsibility, pressure, care, temptation—these may be set down as certain. How exacting the program of the year looks to most of us. Were we not obliged to drive ourselves back to the old round yesterday? "Another year of this!" we caught ourselves saying. The very changelessness of our lives—that sounds strange, doesn't it? but, as everyone who reads this knows, it is not strange—is sometimes the thing most unnerving about them. How can I keep this strain up for another year? Will I be equal to the financial obligation which I know the coming months are sure to bring to me? Will my health hold out under the burden that is upon me as I cross this boundary with so long a stretch before me? These are only a few of the questions that are bound to present themselves the moment we stop and think. Answer them as Mr. McKinley told a friend of mine he answered the administrative ques-

tions that came to him. It was just at the opening of the Spanish-American War. Criticisms were being freely spoken throughout the country. It was uncertain what course the other great nations would follow. All looked dark; the responsibility of steering the Ship of State through such a fog was terrific. But the great President was brave, steady, well-poised throughout it all, and he gave his secret away when he said to my friend: "These are terrible days, but I am taking one step at a time." Will this not explain his choice of Cardinal Newman's hymn as his favorite?—why he wanted sung to him when he was dying those beautiful words we are all so fond of singing, but often sing, I fear, without giving them their true meaning:

"Keep thou my feet; I do not ask to see
The distant scene; one step enough for me."

It is with the tasks and burdens and struggles of life, I find more and more, as it was with our examinations in college. They had to be reckoned with one by one, as they came along on the schedule. If we worried about

and tried to prepare for the Greek examination two days ahead, while we were getting ready for the Latin test that was to come the next day, the probability was that we would flunk in both.

If there is one man above another who to-day needs to adopt this motto, "One step at a time," it is the man who begins the New Year with some freshly formed resolution—a habit he is going to try to break, a reform he is setting himself to bring about, a religious advance he will seek to accomplish. As he will eat one meal at a time, never thinking of making one visit to the table supply the physical demand of a week to come; as he will take his nightly sleep, or plan to do so, as the nights of the year come one by one to him; as he will turn the leaves of his diary, or consult his calendar each morning when he reaches his office for the appointments of that day, and not of the day following, and give himself to their fulfillment—in like manner must he deal with the obstacles that through the year will threaten his spiritual advance. A spurt ahead, as if one were bound to run the gauntlet at once and be done with it, is

the poorest possible start for a new year. Each day's temptations must be met by themselves, and that means persevering, instant prayer, a continuing purpose, renewing "the battle boldly every day," as the line of the old hymn phrases it.

Oh, is there any lesson we need so much to learn—all of us—as that? Each temptation met separately, each religious duty taken up when it comes and attended to then and there, no struggle passed through in advance, but the battles fought when they force themselves upon us. One day at a time and each emergency or endeavor in its order! Adopt that rule, resolving soul, and your resolutions will be as strong on the thirty-first day of December as they are on the first of January. Nay, far more so; for to-day they are mere hopes, promises, expectations; then they will be achievements.

"We mourn too much for our dead yesterdays,

We dread too anxiously unborn to-morrows.

To-day is ours for love, for joy, for praise,

Yea, and for pains, perchance, and possible sorrows.

To-day is ours for righteous living,

For patience, kindness, most of all—thanksgiving.

“ Out of the grace divine it comes to us,
A sweet, bright thing from darkling shadows creeping;
A day with mercies multitudinous,
And loves and duties always in its keeping;
Whose opportunities, alas, are wasted,
And sweetest things too often pass untasted.”

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